The New REPUBLIC

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The Week

THE Ethiopian war is over. With the Italian forces only a few miles from Addis Ababa, resistance suddenly collapsed and the Emperor and his court fled by train to Djibuti, en route to Palestine. The Italians won, not over men but over nature; no one could expect semi-savages, armed with a nondescript collection of rifles to stand up against airplane bombs, tanks and poison gas. The terrain the Italians crossed was such a difficult one that nearly all the military experts in the world predicted the accomplishment would take years; but the military experts were wrong. Italy now stands free to annex Ethiopia or to do anything else with it that she chooses, secure in the knowledge that there is no power or combination of powers anywhere in the world with both the ability and the willingness to stop her. The end of the fighting brings in its wake diplomatic problems of the greatest magnitude. When one member of the League can, with no justification whatever, attack and conquer another member, how is the Geneva body to be kept alive at all? What shall be done about the partial and limited sanctions already applied to Italy in the delusive hope that they would end the war? If Great Britain considered that her position in the Mediterranean, the "lifeline of Empire," was menaced, is that menace not twice as serious today? If Italy controls Ethiopia, including the headwaters of the Nile, is the British position in Egypt still tenable? On the other hand, with the Italo-Ethiopian affair settled, no matter how unhappily, will the British now at last take a firm line against Hitler? The next few weeks, during which some at least of these questions will be answered, will be one of the most frenzied periods of diplomatic readjustment in modern history.

THE run-off election in France, which we discuss elsewhere in these pages, confirmed and overwhelmingly amplified the swing to the Left recorded in the first election a week earlier. The situation in Austria continued tense, with a heavy mobilization of Austrian troops in the border provinces. Great Britain went ahead with her program of desperately rapid armament, appropriating $400,000,000 to be spent on the Singapore base, on unspecified military developments in the Mediterranean and on the construction of thirty-eight new war vessels, including two first-line battleships. In the Western hemisphere, Secretary Hull issued the proposed agenda for the Inter-American Conference to be held in Buenos Aires some time this summer, confirming advance reports that among the subjects the United States hopes to see discussed is the complete problem of the rights of neutrals in wartime. Cuba's pseudo dictator, Colonel Fulgencio Batista, responded to the demand for an investigation of the recent series of "mysterious killings" of prisoners with an inquiry of his own—which is about like having a man-eating shark report upon the carnivorous habits of the man-eating shark.

THE United States Chamber of Commerce sang its old familiar song in Washington last week. Its spokesmen as usual showed they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. What they want in general is a return to the policies with which Mr. Hoover so successfully defeated the depression in the years 1930 to 1933. The worst stock-market

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break in nearly two years took place, confirming the judgment expressed in the issue of The New Republic appearing a few days earlier, that the prices of stocks on the whole were completely out of line with earnings. The House passed the new tax bill, which the Senate will now proceed to rewrite. Stormy negotiations between anthracite miners and mine owners brought the threat of a strike nearer. The naval-appropriations bill, calling for $531,000,000, was passed by the House, with a joker inserted at the last minute authorizing two new 35,000-ton battleships if the President finds them necessary to maintain existing naval ratios—as of course he will. It was announced that a motor caravan of Dr. Townsend's supporters would leave Los Angeles for Washington, being augmented along the way. In New Jersey the state authorities, with the loud approval of Tories all over the country, continued their experiment of trying to see just how near the unemployed can be brought to absolute starvation before the hunger riots begin.

THE Austrian crisis has been augmented by the failure of the Phoenix Life Insurance Company of Vienna (not connected with the American company of similar name). The failure is likely to rank as an epic story of financial collapse in modern times, in some ways even more incredible than the Insull and Kreuger affairs. It was discovered that a vast sum had been taken from the reserves of the company and given away to a long list of notable personages in Austrian public life—a sum that is known to be at least $80,000,000 and may prove to be more than $100,000,000 when all the facts are revealed. It was at first thought that this was a case of wholesale bribery, but the hypothesis crumbled when it was discovered that the recipients of this largesse were of all political faiths—Nazis, Social Democrats, supporters of the government and its opponents, Catholics, Jews, soldiers, newspaper editors. The most plausible explanation and the only one that makes sense is that the late Dr. Berliner, former acting head of the company, had simply gone out of his mind in a quiet, conservative way and had scattered the company's assets as he might have distributed dinner favors. So far as is known, not a single person in Austria's public life refused to accept these huge donations, running into many thousands of dollars, or sought to have the proceeding stopped. One and all, they took what they got, and hid it. To such a point have public and private morals sunk in one of the erstwhile great, civilized states of Europe.

THE Robinson anti-chain-store bill, passed by the Senate, appears to be an honest attempt to make laissez-faire work. It aims to keep in business a large number of small competitors, on the well established ground that a few large business firms may use monopolistic practices, and may gain dominance by other means than superior efficiency. Nobody who believes in capitalism can afford to denounce this bill—as most of the major adherents of capitalism do—since effective competition is the only safeguard of the consumer in the long run, and the chain store's deceitful exploitation of the purchaser by untruthful advertising, unnecessary branding and loss-leader pricing is only too obvious. The New Republic does oppose the bill, but not as a partisan of big business in retailing. We oppose it (a) because, as with all other anti-monopoly measures, the impossibility of successful administration will make it largely ineffective, and (b) because in so far as it does curb the abuses of bigness it will also destroy the possibility of savings and increased efficiency in a field where tremendous waste has always existed. The true remedy lies in a collectivist system of distribution, in which consumers' coöperatives may play a large part.

FOR fifty years, May first has been a day of celebration for labor and particularly for radical labor, throughout the world. This year the parades and demonstrations in many countries were unusually large and impressive because of the new united-front tactics of Socialists and Communists. In the United States the most striking of many parades throughout the country was that in New York City, which lasted for nine hours and in which many thousands of persons participated. Only the old-guard Socialists declined to take part and held a celebration of their own at the Polo Grounds. A noteworthy aspect of this year's parade was the large number of white-collar marchers—teachers, lawyers, writers, artists, actors and even a section of ministers. As impressive as anything else was the action of the police, who, under instructions from Mayor LaGuardia and Commissioner Valentine, left their billies at home, did their duties in a courteous and efficient manner, and thus preserved almost perfect peace and order. No more telling evidence has been presented that disorder in demonstrations of citizens is usually, when it occurs, the result of police provocation.

IN THE pages of Business Week are assembled some statistics comparing the first three months of 1936 with the similar period in 1935. While in certain cases little or no improvement is shown, in others the percentage of increase is striking. Steel production is up 10 percent. House building has increased 74 percent and building of other types 117 percent. The lumber output has increased about 34 percent, electric power 12 percent, petroleum 11 percent, wood 14 percent, rayon 10 percent, cotton 9 percent. Transactions involving bank checks are up 20 percent, grain shipments 21 percent, metallic ore 51 percent, machine-tool orders 81 percent, cement shipments 33 percent, automobile sales 22 percent, electric refrigerators 32 percent, department-store sales 6 percent. This is what is known, in The New York Herald Tribune, The New York Sun and some other places, as Ruining the Country à la Roosevelt.

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A SENTENCE of death would seem rather excessive punishment for the crime of illegal entry into the United States. Nevertheless, that is what may happen to Otto Richter unless the American government changes its mind before Friday, May 15. Richter, a young German Communist, is to be sent back to his country on that date. He fled for his life from Germany some time ago after having been tortured by the Nazis in an unsuccessful attempt to make him confess complicity in the burning of the Reichstag, which, as the whole world now knows, was done by the Nazis themselves. Said Ritchter this week: "They may as well ship me back to Nazi Germany as a corpse because I'll be just as good as dead once Hitler's men lay their hands on me. I'll be shot or sent to a concentration camp, but I would rather be shot than go to a camp." Richter was married a month ago to an American girl—who can hardly help drawing some comparisons between Nazi and American humanitarianism.

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama, which has figured in the news in connection with the Scottsboro case, now furnishes a demonstration of how lynch law works. Walter Miller, a young Negro indicted for the criminal assault and murder of a nineteen-year-old white girl, was saved from threatened lynching when a detachment of 112 National Guardsmen used a barrage of gas grenades to disperse a mob. A threatened lynching is bad enough under any circumstances, but this one was made particularly disturbing by a realization of what nearly happened a few weeks earlier. Bloodhounds taken to the spot where the girl's body was found had followed a trail leading almost to a cabin in which there were four Negro boys, who were arrested and brought to Huntsville. A mob formed, determined to take the prisoners away from the authorities, and so inflamed was public opinion that a lynching seemed inevitable. Troops, hastily summoned by the sheriff, arrived barely in time to prevent a quadruple killing. Later, Miller was arrested in Terre Haute, Indiana, and is alleged to have confessed the crime. The Grand Jury then set free four wholly innocent boys who, but for the timely arrival of armed Guardsmen, would long since have been hanging from trees as examples of the superiority of the white race and the excellence of American justice.

ONE of the peculiar convolutions of which the human mind plus human prejudice is capable is illustrated by the banning of the magazine Opportunity from the approved list for the public schools of Washington, D. C. This journal of Negro life is the official publication of the National Urban League and it carries on a consistently enlightened campaign to raise the standards of culture, well-being and self-respect among Negroes and to improve relations between the white and black races. It is now banned on the almost fantastic grounds that the word "nigger" has been allowed to appear in its columns. This was the official reason given by Garnet C. Wilkinson, first assistant superintendent of the public schools of the District of Columbia. In a letter of reply, Elmer A. Carter, editor of Opportunity, very patiently pointed out that "the use of the term 'nigger' . . . is limited to quotations from other writers, or is the reproduction in poem or story of the speech and conversation of characters who commonly use this term"; and added, "It should not be necessary for me to direct your attention to the fact that there is a vast and obvious difference in the use of a word or phrase in quotation and its use as a definitive term in the editorial contents of a publication." With this statement of editorial theory and practice The New Republic is in complete agreement. The real background of the banning seems to be that in the present anti-Red and anti-subversive hysteria in the District of Columbia even so temperate and praiseworthy a publication as Opportunity was tracked down by the witch-burners and some pretext had to be fabricated to cover the case. The resultant ruling, if applied impartially, would eliminate practically every literate publication in the United States.

ENEMIES of the Roosevelt administration speak harshly, and with a good deal of justification, of the spoils system as practised by Jim Farley and his cohorts. Some of these critics, however, need to put their own houses in order. There is, for instance, Governor Gene Talmadge of Georgia. Gene some time ago found it necessary to select a new state forester, and chose for the post a gentleman named Elmer Dyal. Thereupon he received a protest from Professor H. H. Chapman, president of the Society of American Foresters, the professional organization of foresters in the United States. Professor Chapman pointed out that the Georgia law requires the state forester to be technically trained, with at least two years' experience, while Mr. Dyal

> is not in any sense of the word a technically trained forester and has never had a single hour's technical instruction in any school or department of forestry.

Governor Talmadge's reply deserves to be recorded on the pages of history:

> I am sure you do not know Mr. Dyal. He is a born forester. A wood ranger right. He was born down in the Okefenoke Swamp.

This makes about as much sense as though Governor Gene had appointed a man chief health officer of the state because he had been born in the shadow of a hospital (we hope we haven't given him an idea). But then, Governor Gene is not supposed to make sense, as all Georgians know.

TELEVISION seems certain to come out of its hiding place this summer. A large-scale experimental broadcasting station is being constructed on top of the Empire State Building in New York City, and official announcements from the Radio Corpo-

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ration of America say that it will be ready for operation within a few months. R.C.A.'s chief rival, Farnsworth Television, whose system has been adopted for trial by the British and German governments and is now undergoing test constructions in those countries, is also showing great activity at its headquarters in Philadelphia. Both these systems employ the electrical-scanning principle, which practically renders obsolete all previous mechanical-scanning systems. The Federal Communications Commission is now holding a series of hearings to establish uniform standards so that a given television receiving set will operate interchangeably on either an R.C.A. or Farnsworth sending signal. Unlike sound broadcasting, in television any change in procedure will render useless existing recieving sets, so that any setting up of standards immediately "freezes" development of both sending and receiving while the standards remain in force. This is but one of the almost infinitely complicated technical problems that face television. Scientists agree that the development of television will be vastly slower than the development of sound broadcasting. So far, plans call for the distribution of only a limited number of receiving sets, to be given out by the television companies largely to their own staffs and used for experimental purposes. Television possibly will be offered to the general public next year. The size of the image developed for home receiving sets thus far is ten by fourteen inches.

NAZI Germany goes right on sending out lists of the institutions of higher learning in North America that have "accepted" invitations to participate in this summer's celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of the University of Heidelberg. The current list of sixteen acceptances has been met with prompt denial of official participation by five colleges: Vassar, the University of Michigan, Alberta University, Davidson College and Western Reserve University—almost one-third of the list. Indications of how openly the German government plans to make the Heidelberg fête a Nazi sounding-board are found in the preliminary program listing speeches by Propaganda Minister Goebbels and other government officials. On one particular occasion three out of four speeches are to be delivered by Nazi spokesmen. Presumably they will talk about the glories of the German educational system. Relevant evidence about that system is offered in the current drive of the American Jewish Distribution Committee for funds to take care of the estimated 60,000 Jewish children who are now excluded from German public schools and colleges by the latest anti-Semitic decrees. Further evidence is offered by a special report of the Committee on Education of the Federal Bar Association, which finds that "academic freedom is dead in Germany . . . and scientific progress is in a state of demoralization and degeneration." This is the sort of thing to which participants in the Heidelberg celebration will be giving their endorsement.

The Week of Crisis

IN ALL the critical weeks that Europe has experienced during the past year, none was more portentous than that ending the third of May. Mussolini made certain his conquest of Ethiopia. The coalition of the Left won an impressive victory in the French elections. Again the questions arise with renewed insistence: What will Italy do? What will France do? What will England do? What will Germany do? What will happen to the League?

Mussolini has given the Italians the military glory that he has promised them, and has thus, at least temporarily, strengthened his regime. He threatens the British from both sides near the sources of the Nile, he weakens their prestige, not only in North and East Africa but throughout the world, and he bestrides their route to India through the Suez Canal. From the immediate, military point of view, his strategy has won a brilliant success. It would seem that he is free to begin again in Southeastern Europe, where his ambitions have long led him and where he already has the existing Austrian dictatorship as his vassal.

The victory, however, has depleted his economic reserves. Sanctions did not stop his warfare, but they did cost the country dearly and have lowered the meager Italian standard of living. Even without sanctions the economic situation of the nation, already bad enough, would have been seriously weakened by the costly expedition. The strain of policing and exploiting a colony not likely to return profits to the Italian people will further weaken his slender resources. The army cannot be demobilized because there will be no employment for its members. The League may decide to withdraw and regard the rape of Ethiopia as a *fait accompli;* but it is a deed that cannot remain without a successor. Mussolini is like a gunman who has terrorized the community by a successful hold-up, but his loot consists of non-cashable bonds and he can take advantage of his success only by blackmail of those frightened by his crime.

Oddly enough, on the very day that Mussolini's military success made sanctions useless, the French elections swept into power those opposed to Laval's pro-Italian policy, those who had been arguing for strengthening of the League by strict application of sanctions against both Mussolini and Hitler. The People's Front was built upon opposition to fascism in France; it is equally opposed to fascism in Italy and Germany. But now it has to accept the result that the French statesmen formerly in power strove to bring about when they declined to coöperate with the British in putting stronger pressure on Italy. Mussolini, with a triumphant army, can now turn his face toward Europe and, if he remains a faithful ally of France, can oppose Hitler's southward march.

What Hitler may have lost by the freeing of Italy's hands in Europe he may possibly win by

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internal French dissension following the victory of the People's Front. This is an aggregation that has been held together more by its hostility to the Right and the fear of fascism than by a positive program. Its chief components are Communists on the extreme left, Socialists and Radical Socialists on the right. Though the Socialists comprise the largest single block of deputies, they do not hold a majority, and cannot do so even with the aid of the Communists. The Radical Socialists, on whom they depend, would here be called liberals. A thoroughgoing program of socialization therefore seems impossible. The danger confronting a Socialist government that does not dare undertake basic economic and social changes has been illustrated before this in England and Germany. What it is able to do, even if it goes as far as the minimum program adopted by the People's Front—nationalization of the Bank of France and of war industries, extended social insurance, protection of agricultural prices and suppression of the fascist leagues—will scarcely satisfy the desire of the masses for radical improvement. It may be forced by circumstances to devalue the franc, an unpopular measure. If it is weakened and split in the course of its attempt to rule, the chance of the Right, and even of those who want a fascist coup, will arrive. If the Right comes to power, it will tend to be pro-Hitler and anti-Soviet. If civil strife is precipitated, Hitler can be depended upon to take advantage of the resulting confusion. Only the most skillful leadership, coupled with some good luck, can avoid these perils of the French Left.

Though, traditionally, the Left has been pacifistic and in favor of conciliating Germany by revision of the Treaty of Versailles, it has recently become reoriented about a policy of preserving the French republic against fascist perils both without and within. At the same time, the Right elements, former super-nationalists, have shown indications of wanting to make terms with Hitler as a basis for an anti-Communist drive throughout Europe. It may be indicated, therefore, that the Left, after first conciliating pacifist opinion by proposing general disarmament and a policy of economic adjustment which Hitler is unlikely to accept, will turn the situation to their account by opposing a strong front to the German menace, building up French military defenses and strengthening the assistance pacts with the Soviet Union and others.

British statesmen have suffered a cruel blow by the Italian victory. Their announced policy has been to support the League as a structure to guarantee peace, and to lay the cornerstone by checking the Italian aggressor. But the League has utterly failed. It adopted a forcible-feeble policy, the results of which were worse than not acting at all. The British blame Laval and the French for their failure, but the responsibility lies deeper than that. If the British statesmen had been more ready to guarantee France against Hitler, they might have driven a bargain by which France would sacrifice Italy. Or if, earlier than that, they had shown more enthusiasm for the League, or had supported it against Japan, Mussolini might have been checked at the beginning merely by threat of punishment.

The reasons why they did not do these things lie deeper still. The League, as The New Republic has often pointed out, always concealed a fatal confusion about peace. Its chief support came from people in Britain and elsewhere who had a horror of war. But the Covenant meant, if it meant anything effective, a threat to use war against any nation that by force challenged the status established at Versailles. That status could not be indefinitely maintained; it was bound to be challenged sometime, as British statesmen and pacifists well knew. They fatuously assumed, however, that economic sanctions sufficiently mild not to provoke armed resistance would stop an aggressor, or that the mere threat of military sanctions would prevent the necessity for ever having to use them. The trouble is that aggressors were sure to know that this threat was an empty bluff. Pacifists cannot effectively threaten force against aggression unless they are prepared to use it.

As British opinion is now coming to see, either the nations must be ready to support a League war, or they must take the teeth out of Article XVI and pursue another policy. But here Britain is faced by a maze of confusion. No matter what is done now to strengthen the League, who will ever again believe it means business? If, on the other hand, the teeth are taken out of it, must they not be put into another system of alliances, which offer even greater danger of war? And how about the self-governing dominions, which are not bound to aid the empire in war, but have been practically tied to it through the League? Britain is not ready, either physically or morally, to fight Italy, and still less to fight Germany. The most unlikely thing that can happen, therefore, is that she will take a clear and consistent line in foreign policy. She always muddles, and in her present confusion she will muddle more than ever.

One of the first things on the international program is, without much question, that Mussolini will try his blackmail on Great Britain. He will force the British to choose whether they will have him as an enemy or as a friend. The price of his friendship will be the financial assistance he so badly needs, plus a free hand in Southeastern Europe. Britain must either abet Mussolini's empire-building, at the cost of European peace, or fight him now herself. To back Mussolini means to throw Jugoslavia into the arms of Hitler and possibly, in the long run, Austria and other nations as well. Similar Italian blackmail, if successfully exercised against France, will cost France her prestige with the Little Entente.

Hitler also will continue his game of seeking economic assistance in England, and of immobilizing her diplomatically while he prepares for war in the East. More than ever there is a danger that those in financial London who favor this policy will

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now have their way. The fascist powers would decline from internal economic weakness if outsiders did not come to their aid, but they have used and will continue to use the threat of war in order to compel the extension of this assistance.

What then? Will Britain revise her balance-of-power policy so as to allow Germany and Italy to come into conflict? But that does not decrease, it rather increases, the danger of general war. And there is always the possibility that Hitler and Mussolini will come to terms for a division of the spoils, as Central Europe falls between them. Then they may turn simultaneously East and West, to root out socialism and democracy not only in Russia but also in France and England! It is not a pretty prospect, no matter from what side you look at it. There is no easy, simple way out of the confusion. But one fact looms more solidly than ever. As long as the Fascist and Nazi dictatorships endure, the peace of Europe will not be safe. And they must in time fall if France, Great Britain and the United States resolutely decline to give them financial aid. Whether, before that fall, war would come nobody can tell. But to make terms with them, to strengthen them, is to make war inevitable.

The J. P. Morgan Defense

J. P. MORGAN and Company has in recent years abandoned the old policy of refusing to give information to the press or to acknowledge that the public has any legitimate concern with the firm's policies. Latest and most striking result of the new attitude is a memorandum that has been prepared in reply to the report of the Senate Munitions Committee—a report not yet made public but of which the Morgan firm believes that it knows the general tenor. The Morgan memorandum itself has not yet been published, but a summary of its conclusions has found its way into the press.

In general it denies the thesis that American loans to, and trade with, the Allies were the chief factors in bringing the United States into the War. The memorandum complains that the Senate Munitions Committee did not study the whole question of why the United States joined the conflict, but only financial and commercial activities during 1914-17. It denies that the bankers ever told President Wilson he must choose between going to war and an economic crisis at home, and says there is no proof that Ambassador Page's famous cablegram was ever seen by President Wilson or that it influenced him. American investors in the securities of the Allies, it is said, were not alarmed by the situation. Not only were leading members of the government pro-Ally from the beginning, but public opinion as a whole approved of and encouraged the trade in war materials.

It is flatly denied that the failure of the British government to support the value of the pound in August, 1915, was an attempt to blackmail the United States government into approving a public loan for the Allies, or that J. P. Morgan and Company had advance information that the pound would not be supported. Two-thirds of the vast business in war supplies was not financed by long-term credits but through the normal course of trade. While it is true that after we entered the War the Treasury took over previous private American loans to the Allies, these were only two percent of the total cost of American participation in the War. Actually, the government paid out one-quarter of the private loans outstanding when we entered the War.

This is an extreme view of the bankers' innocence, about as unrealistic as the theory of extremists on the other side, that the financial interests told Mr. Wilson he must enter the War to save their dollars. Sensible students of the subject have never held either of these positions. The United States went to war for a whole series of reasons, among which was undoubtedly the fact that our commercial and financial interests were inextricably bound up with the cause of the Allies. Of equal importance for the future of this country is the fact that foreign trade and investments, made in times of peace, can and do play a great part in bringing nations to the brink of conflict. We did not need the report of the Senate Munitions Committee to show us that these things are true; and no number of memoranda by J. P. Morgan and Company or anybody else could disprove them.

Mass Action in the Northwest

HEARTENING news comes from the Pacific Coast to those who want to see in America a farmer-labor party with genuine mass support. The Washington Commonwealth Federation, already tested in the fires of a municipal campaign in Seattle, is growing stronger daily and is making contact with progressive groups in other states with a view toward united and effective action in the coming national election. One statewide convention already has been held (April 4 and 5), and another is scheduled for July to decide upon a plan of action after the major national parties have put their candidates in the field.

The Washington Commonwealth Federation advocates an immediate production-for-use program for the unemployed, and ultimate extension of the principle to the whole population. The Federation platform includes immediate passage of the Frazier-Lundeen bill for unemployment insurance; increased appropriations for expanding W.P.A. projects under union wage and hour conditions; higher relief rates; adoption of the Amlie-Benson youth bill; uncompromising opposition to war and fascism; removal of the veto power of the Supreme Court; adoption of legislation giving effective guarantees of labor's right to organize and to bargain collectively; and preservation of civil liberties and academic freedom. On this program the Federation

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has been able to unite progressive elements of the older parties, organized labor, farmers, teachers, shopkeepers and others.

The conservative president of the State Federation of Labor advised unions to stay out of the Commonwealth Federation, but a strong rank-and-file movement defied him and sent a large delegation to the state convention. This duplicated the history of the Seattle elections on February 25, where Tom Smith, left-wing leader, was backed by the Washington Commonwealth Federation, but the Central Labor Council refused to endorse him, on the ground that he didn't have a chance. Individual labor votes, however, contributed greatly to his final total, which brought him within 1,200 votes of being nominated in the preferential primary. In the final election on March 10, the Commonwealth Federation candidate for corporation counsel received 35,000 votes, 11,000 short of election, while a liberal university professor and a Congregational minister, who were backed by the Federation for the school board, came within 18,000 votes of election. These may seem to be large gaps, but they show tremendous advances over previous left-wing strength. The Socialist Party, for instance, refused to join the united front, and its candidates received an average vote of less than 4,000.

Can the Church Be Neutral?

THE NEWS from Columbus, Ohio, where the Methodist Episcopal Church is holding its regular quadrennial conference, suggests that the conservative delegates may force the church to divorce itself from forthright social action. This swing to the right is clearly foreshadowed in the Episcopal address delivered last week by Bishop H. Hughes on behalf of the Board of Bishops. The address urges moderation on social issues and declares that "property, whether among ministers or merchants, is not proof of iniquity." In many instances, it observes, the profit motive has been joined by the benevolence motive.

The temporizing nature of these sentiments can best be judged by comparing them with the resolution adopted at the last general conference in 1932. In this the Methodists went on record as believing that "the present industrial order is un-Christian, unethical and anti-social, because it is largely based on the profit motive, which is a direct appeal to selfishness." The resolution called for the creation of a new social order. It seems almost unbelievable that the experiences of the past four years would make religious leaders less critical of a social system, but that is apparently what has happened.

To those familiar with the enlightened stand that the church has taken on numerous questions in the past, this news is bound to be disheartening. It is doubly so in view of the general apathy of religious leaders toward social and economic issues. Last year, the Religion and Labor Foundation sent a questionnaire to 100,000 religious leaders of twenty-two major faiths and denominations. The purpose was to find out the social-action pattern of ministers on social legislation, civil liberties, industrial disputes, labor's right to organize, etc. Fewer than 5,000 replies were returned in all, while out of 22,000 Southern Baptists only 50 responded.

From the replies it is clear that the social-action pattern of the Protestant religious leader is pretty negligible. Only three percent had ever supported such progressive legislation as old-age pensions, unemployment insurance and the child-labor amendment. Only 3.6 percent had ever supported the right of free speech, assembly and press by public pronouncement, while only 1.5 percent had ever made their churches available as meeting places. Less than two percent had ever participated in any way in an industrial dispute; only 1.8 percent had ever made an effort to get the facts or acquaint their people with them. To offer the church or synagogue for strike meetings was practically unthinkable. The only encouraging feature was the fact that a substantial number promised to be more active on social issues in the future.

At Columbus, however, the trend appears to be in the opposite direction. On the theory that the church should be "non-partisan," the conservatives are directing their main attack against the Methodist Federation for Social Service. The Federation has played an active and determined role in the struggle for a planned economy—and the conservatives would like to deny it the right to use the name Methodist. This would hardly prove fatal to the Federation, whose members have repeatedly demonstrated their courage and ability, but it would be a sad reflection on the thinking of the leaders of the church. For the Federation has been a genuine credit to the Methodists, especially in a period when religious leaders have been all too complacent. Moreover, to believe that the church can be "non-partisan" by refusing to take a stand on economic and political issues today is merely to play into the hands of Hearst and the incipient Fascists, who would like to muzzle the ministers completely.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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How an Anti-Red Committee Works

FELIX MARCUS McWHIRTER is president of the Peoples State Bank of Indianapolis. He is a short, rather slight man of about fifty, earnest and cautious, fond of long-winded oratory, to which his wealth gives weight; a typical specimen of the Midwestern solid business man in whom solidity is perhaps the most impressive quality readily apparent. He is a Deke, a Republican, a Methodist, a Mason and the father of three children. In his youth he went to De Pauw University in nearby Greencastle, Indiana—his birthplace—but never got his degree, a point that may throw some light on his subsequent deep absorption, not to say interference, in the internal affairs of De Pauw. Felix Marcus McWhirter used to be a civilian aide to Secretary of War Patrick Hurley. He was once a member of the Indianapolis Bureau of Public Safety. During the War he was a major on General Goodrich's staff. He likes the companionship of military men and seldom misses a chance to march in their parades. He is a lieutenant-commander of the Intelligence Corps of the Naval Reserve. He is a member of the National Defense Committee of the Reserve Officers' Association. He is active in the work of the Navy League. He is the chairman—and this is the reason why he is being discussed here—of the United States Chamber of Commerce's Committee on Combating Subversive Activities.

It is a big job, and Felix Marcus McWhirter takes it seriously. He is a zealous and self-sacrificing foe of pacifists, to whom he refers in his correspondence as "the pinks." He devotes a lot of time to the affairs of the Better America Federation, the Constitutional Protective League, the Advisory Associates and the Military Intelligence Association. Once he wrote to the head of the navy's information section that he had succeeded in getting four columns of Navy League material printed in The Indianapolis News, committing that paper to an "anti-chief-executive attitude." It "was not easy," he wrote modestly, "especially when we had one or two on the editorial department conscientiously pacifistic." Obviously, when the Chamber of Commerce set about building up a Red scare, it could find no better man for the work than Felix Marcus McWhirter. For the Chamber's Subversive Activities Committee is a modern anti-radical, anti-liberal, anti-pacifist organization—not one of your old-time Red-baiting outfits like the National Civic Federation, which still creaks along with tales of Moscow gold and the nationalization of women, but a well equipped, up-to-the-minute apparatus. Since such propaganda machines have become a conspicuous feature of American social life, a first-hand description of how one works may be of value.

It was my dubious privilege to work for the Chamber's Subversive Activities Committee when Mr. McWhirter was just getting the elaborate machinery into motion. So I saw it when it was running smoothly and when it was beginning to shake and rattle and develop all sorts of knocks and loose connections at high speeds. I saw it turn out great quantities of anti-communist material abstracted from the Hearst and Macfadden press and reprinted from The Nation's Business. I saw it transform almost unreadable anti-communist speeches from The Congressional Record into brief, attractive, understandable digests. And then what? Well, then I saw this elaborate and expensive piece of machinery being made an instrument in a personal feud being waged by its chairman and his associates. Such is the nature of anti-Red committees. It worked like this: The powerful and dignified United States Chamber of Commerce set up a Committee on National Defense. The National Defense Committee set up a subcommittee on combating subversive activities. Some of the most prominent business men in the country served on it. A staff was hired, plans were made, work was started. Then the full weight of the apparatus was devoted to attacking the Methodist president of a college of 1,200 students that Felix Marcus McWhirter had been suspended from in his youth.

Mr. McWhirter, as I have said, is president of the Peoples State Bank of Indianapolis. The Peoples State Bank is the national depository of the American Legion. One of the offices in the bank building is occupied by James E. Campbell, director of the Constitutional Protective League and chairman of the subversive activities committee of the Reserve Officers' Association. The Protective League, by the way, claims to have an organization in seven states, based on county units, which enrolls men with military training who can be counted on to combat radicalism. Its plans even call for ambulances and doctors to minister to members who are injured while they are out combating subversive activities and protecting the Constitution.

Since the Peoples State Bank is the national depository of the American Legion, it was only natural that Mr. McWhirter, as chairman of the Chamber's subversive activities committee, should call on Edward Hayes, former Legion Commander, to talk on "How Red Is America?" at the twenty-third convention of the Chamber last May. Since James E. Campbell maintains offices in the Peoples Bank Building it was only natural that he, too, should be introduced to the Chamber members as a first-rate subversive-activities combater. For the Chamber's anti-Red drive got under way at its

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twenty-third convention, although work had been going on ever since the San Francisco general strike.

Mr. McWhirter's colleagues on the committee form a distinguished group. One is Lewis Pierson, who is chairman of the board of the Irving Trust Company, with offices at Number One Wall Street, a director of National Power and Light and of the American Smelting and Refining Company. He, too, is a Republican. He is also a member of the Sons of the Revolution and of the Japan Society and is a former president of the United States Chamber of Commerce. Another active committee member is Silas Strawn, also a former Chamber president, a hearty, broad-shouldered and booming-voiced old gentleman, now seventy, who is a director of the First National Bank of Chicago, general counsel of the Union Stockyards and a former president of the American Bar Association. "Radical college presidents are hard to catch," he says, "because they are like jackasses, who never bray outside the barn." He, too, is a Republican. So is Fred Clausen, chairman of the Holeproof Hosiery, president of the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin and vice-president of the American Founders' Association, which is almost the granddaddy of the aggressively reactionary organizations. These men, together with Philip Fay of San Francisco, who is interested in the Industrial Association there, and Adolph Schleicher of Los Angeles, who is supporter of the Better America Federation of that city, are the really industrious members of the Committee on Combating Subversive Activities. The others, aside from sporadic efforts, are principally valuable as window-dressing. But they make an imposing display. They include James Farrell, former president of U. S. Steel, and Walter Teagle, president of Standard Oil of New Jersey.

The sort of work these distinguished and wealthy citizens are responsible for is a little hard to describe. I went to work for the Committee a few weeks before the convention at which Edward Hayes described how red he thought America was. I was to make a study of Communist propaganda and to suggest how the Chamber's program could be brought to the sympathetic attention of educational and religious leaders. Or so I thought. I prepared articles and speeches popularizing the material in the Lusk, the McCormack and the Fish committee reports. I prepared copy for a monthly bulletin called "Safeguards Against Subversive Activities." The rest of my job included exchanging publications with other Red-baiters and professional patriotic agencies, starting a bureau that would provide "safe" speakers and spy on "suspicious" speakers, and studying the chauvinistic educational programs of the Legion, the D.A.R., the Paul Reveres, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Junior Chamber of Commerce in an attempt to form a united front with these organizations. The idea of a National Defense Week, now sponsored by these societies, originated in this subcommittee.

I took it seriously. I prepared a digest of articles from The American Economic Review and The Quarterly Journal of Economics. I thought subversive activities might be combated by examining the conditions that created them. I was told, however, that members of the Committee on Combating Subversive Activities were of such a character that when they saw the phrases "a better social order" or "the more abundant life" they thought they were seeing communism. Consequently all such efforts were promptly squelched. In place of material of that kind, Chamber members were referred to a dubious series on Russia in the Hearst papers. Well, perhaps dubious is not quite the word. They were referred to another highly theoretical article called "Will the Communists Get Our Girls in the Colleges?" in Liberty Magazine. The article gave you the idea that there was good reason for believing that there was a strong possibility that the Communists *would* get our girls in the colleges if something wasn't done about it. Then they were referred to an inside exposé of the O.G.P.U. by a former Russian spy. It must have been true because it was printed in True Detective Stories. Articles by Ralph Easley, the grand old man of the Red-baiters, head of the National Civic Federation, were referred to me as suitable material for the monthly bulletin. Somewhere along about this time the police raided the Communist headquarters in Los Angeles and seized a volume called "A Communist Handbook for American Youth." The police seem to prefer to collect such reading matter in that way, rather than by buying it direct. At any rate, the Chamber of Commerce promptly reprinted the handbook. Probably the Chamber distributed more copies of it than the Los Angeles Communists ever did.

In the meantime, officials of the Religious and Welfare Recovery Movement appealed to the Chamber, asking that their work be presented to Chamber members as laying the spiritual basis for economic recovery. Their plea was refused on the ground that the leaders of the movement had been associated with the Federal Council of Churches, which was rated as a pacifist, radical organization. A resolution passed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis was deleted because it called for economic justice as a means of combating communism. Mrs. Elizabeth Dilling's "The Red Network" was the accepted guide in appraising the degree of radicalism in men and organizations. That book, and the Lusk, Fish and McCormack committee reports, formed the four Gospels of the Red-baiters. But a strange discrimination was exercised in the case of the McCormack report. Much of that report deals with anti-Semitic and fascist organizations, in addition to the sections dealing with the Communists. In the Chamber's work, these parts were ignored.

Meanwhile the Chamber continued to lobby for repressive legislation. Some twenty-five approved bills were featured by name and number in the

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Chamber's publications and correspondence. Under Felix Marcus McWhirter's energetic guidance, Chamber members were urged to support legislation requiring the deportation of aliens, setting up an industrial-espionage bureau in the Department of Justice and prohibiting the teaching, publishing or mailing of doctrines regarded by framers of the law as subversive or radical. The military-disaffection and anti-sedition bills were endorsed. However, only about 300 of the Chamber's 1,500 members have gone on record as favoring such legislation, and some are definitely opposed to it.

But to return to Felix Marcus McWhirter, James E. Campbell and the college president. In one of my more difficult tasks, I was commissioned to write a speech called "Communism's Threat to Religion." It was sponsored by the National Chaplain of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Twenty thousand copies were printed by the Chamber in Washington. Then I was asked to prepare an article called "Communism's Threat to Academic Freedom." But there was something very strange about this one. James E. Campbell had written to the Chamber that a resolution passed by the Indiana American Legion and the Indiana Reserve Officers' Association, on August 27, 1935, would "make a nice groundwork for the next address on Communism's Threat to Academic Freedom." He also wrote that the Constitutional Protective League, of which he was director, had prepared this resolution and was distributing it widely. The resolution was an attack on G. Bromley Oxnam, the president of De Pauw University, for his "constant effort" to commit the institution "to a program of radicalism and communistic activity as is evidenced by his many public utterances." The resolution particularly deplored that De Pauw had come to such an evil pass because its record had been so fine "before the advent of the present administration."

Later on James E. Campbell explained how he managed to get the American Legion to attack Dr. Oxnam by name. First the resolution was passed by the Reserve Officers' Association (James E. Campbell, it will be remembered, is chairman of the Association's committee on subversive activities). Then he introduced the resolution to the Americanism committee of the American Legion. It was a pushover. "I took a book," he said, "sold on the De Pauw campus, 'Sex and Youth,' written by Sherwood Eddy, into the committee meeting. Members of the committee were alarmed by the book's contents and," he concluded modestly, "Dr. Oxnam's name was placed in the resolution."

Now, G. Bromley Oxnam has been president of De Pauw since 1928. He is an ordained Methodist minister who was educated at the University of Southern California, at Boston University, Harvard, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and later studied in Japan, India and China. He taught at Southern California and at Boston University, preached in California and was secretary of the World Peace Commission of the Methodist Church. He was also a member of the American Delegation to Russia in 1926 and wrote a book called "Russian Impressions"—he had previously written a study of the Mexicans in Los Angeles and a book on the social principles of Jesus, making a respectable record of accomplishment for a man of forty-five. The correspondence and the resolutions made it clear that my article was to be nothing more or less than an attack on Dr. Oxnam. I asked to be relieved from writing it.

Thereupon I was asked, why such scruples? The piece, I was informed, was really only a job of ghost-writing. Felix Marcus McWhirter, the chairman of the Chamber's Committee on Subversive Activities, intended to take it "to a certain college president in Indianapolis" and persuade him to sponsor it. It would then be printed by the Chamber and distributed by the Constitutional Protective League, to support the American Legion resolutions attacking Dr. Oxnam. Now, the only important college in Indianapolis is Butler University. The president of the board of trustees of Butler University is Mr. Hilton U. Brown, the managing editor of The Indianapolis News, who had already cordially coöperated with Mr. McWhirter in getting Navy League propaganda inserted in that journal. And one of the dominant trustees and financial godfathers of Butler is a gentleman named William Irwin, of the Irwin Trust Company of Indianapolis. Mr. Irwin is one of the owners of The National Republic, the semi-official journal of the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, which carries typical Red-baiting material, a rehash of Hearst editorials and features and much anti-pacifist and militaristic propaganda. The setup was plain. I was to write an article on communism's threat to academic freedom. Felix Marcus McWhirter was to persuade "a certain college president" to sign it. The Chamber of Commerce was to publish it. James E. Campbell and the Constitutional Protective League were to distribute it. And Dr. G. Bromley Oxnam and subversive activities would never get over that stile before moonrise.

But it was getting too complex for me, and I had been opposed to the work I was taking part in for some time. The propaganda apparatus was getting entangled in its own elaborate machinery. It was no longer possible to say who was combating whom. But through the maze of intrigue and deception it was apparent to me that the Committee on Combating Subversive Activities was willing to work with the men who would darken the reputation of a minister whose views Mr. Felix Marcus McWhirter did not approve of. I resigned. I went home and told my wife that we had been rescued from the sea of unemployment by pirates, and preferred the perils of the open sea to complicity in such uncivilized activities.

CLARENCE R. ATHEARN.

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Russian Paradoxes[1]

"ARISTOCRATS": a play about pickpockets, monks, prostitutes and bourgeois saboteurs, reformed on the White Sea Canal. There is a scene where the bourgeois engineer, who has been busy on a big piece of construction, wonders whether he has been working for the Soviets or simply because he was interested in engineering. The two Russians with whom I had gone nodded to one another over this and said that it was very good and very Russian.—Certainly, it would be very unlikely that an American engineer would search his conscience thus: with us, practical activity so predominates that a socialist reorganization would, I should think, present itself in terms of certain practical ends to be accomplished, and I cannot imagine an American, once he was embarked on the project, brooding as to whether he were really sincere, whether he were politically correct, in working on a bridge or a dam. I don't believe we shall ever have "the ideology" in anything like the way the Russians have it. To substitute an American engineer in this scene is to reduce the idea to absurdity.

I had heard that Russians liked to break glasses, but I supposed this had ceased with the old regime. One evening, however, one of my guests began throwing wine-glasses against the wall. I did my best to stop her, because the glasses belonged to the family from whom I had rented the apartment. When I asked her about it the next time I saw her, she said: "I don't know why it is, but when I drink I like to hear the sound!"—She also liked to drive fast in droshkies—which really is rather exciting, as you always think you are going to tip over.

There is a decided hysterical edge to the upper reaches of Moscow life, just as there is in America. The Soviet world, at the antipodes to ours, reflects our danger and panic. Here, even by the tomb of Lenin, even within sight of the Kremlin walls, the fate of humanity itself must sometimes seem precarious. They must sometimes be haunted as we are by a terror that all we have done and are doing may lose its meaning and value, and slide back to ruin again.

Stupendous jamboree given by the Journalists' Club for the Proletarian Division of the Red Army. The journalists and the Red Army are both among the privileged groups: they make more money, eat better food, have access to more information and are able to get prettier wives, than the majority of the people in Moscow. And they did themselves in wonderful style.

The evening began about nine with tea and enormous fancy pastry. Then there was an entertainment in three long and varied sections by the Proletarian Division and their families. They put on a very good show. It began with numbers by the children, who, like all Russians apparently, seemed born actors: there was a conventional fairy dance; a nerve-racking act by a little girl who twisted herself around and lay down on her back on the floor, while balancing a glass of water; and a play in which a boy and a girl went to sleep over a romantic phonograph record and thought they were traveling to Italy, but were waked up by their little comrades and recalled to the tasks of the day. Then there were peasant songs, operatic selections, recitations of Mayakovsky, and a whole series of those stamping and leaping dances beginning with numbers in which one or two figured and working up to a grand finale which I thought would break the platform down.

The officers and men performed together and were only to be distinguished from each other by the insignia on the officers' collars. The Commander was a quiet, agreeable and youthful-appearing little man, who, if it had not been for his uniform, his military sunburn and his clean-shavedness, might have been taken for an artist or a doctor. Certainly the Red Army are quite unlike any other which has ever been seen in our time. Instead of being the least intelligent, they are among the most intelligent members of the community. They are given a special education, because their role is not merely to defeat but also to persuade the enemy, and they must understand their place in history and the real reasons why wars are fought. They read a special Red Army bulletin which gives them fuller information about world affairs than can be derived from Izvestia or Pravda. And they are the only democratic army in Europe.

During one of the intermissions, I talked to an American girl who had been working for some months in Moscow. She had been delighted by one of the songs which had been performed with traditional dance figures in old-fashioned peasant costume. The attitude of the young Red Army men and women in their impersonation of the village girls and swains had been like that of American young people dressing up at an amateur entertainment to sing "Jingle Bells" or "Oh, Susannah!" But the little American comrade, clear-eyed and ardent, said me: "Wasn't that number fine? It's so like life on the collective farms!" The Russian who had brought me, a writer, whose special subject was collective farms, had just been explaining apologetically that the entertainment was esthetically unsatisfactory because the folk art had died

[1] This is the last of a series of five articles on the Soviet Union.—THE EDITORS.

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with the old life and could only be revived self-consciously while, on the other hand, nothing new had yet been evolved to take its place. It is possible in the center of Moscow to be as unrealistic about Russia as anywhere below Fourteenth Street.

After the entertainment, we went in to a tremendous banquet, which began with toasts and bugle flourishes and *zakusky* with wine and beer. The *zakusky* were the most copious I had ever seen—and that is saying a good deal: I assumed they were the supper itself, and was staggered, after I had been eating on this assumption, to be confronted with a procession of further courses. It took several hours to serve them, and all the time a jazz orchestra played. Just before the last course but one, the lights were turned out and a movie commenced: a new German picture with a pretty Hungarian actress. Between reels, the ice cream and the coffee came in.—I left about four in the morning, when the party was still going strong.

These superior groups in the Soviet Union are among the most attractive people in the world, and they seem to be among the happiest.

There is at present a whole hierarchy in Russia based on various degrees of ability and on different departments of service. The differences of income among them are, from the American point of view, very slight; but they are, for Russia, relatively considerable.

Many people discover this with surprise and seem to assume that it must be a violation of the ideals of a socialist society. This is, of course, not the case. It was one of the prime contentions of Marx and Engels that socialist society could not be equalitarian. It would still have to follow in important respects the conformation of social organisms shaped by the specializations of capitalism. Different degrees of ability would be able to command different incomes. "This equal right [in socialist society]," says Marx in the "Critique of the Gotha Program," "is an unequal right for unequal work. It recognizes no class differences because every worker ranks as a worker like his fellows, but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus capacities for production, as natural privileges." (A difficulty, indeed, in the Soviet Union seems to be to make the people in general desire a higher standard of living strongly enough to exert themselves to gain it. It is the purpose of the "culture" campaign to make people seek self-improvement.) And Lenin, on the eve of October, recapitulated, in " State and Revolution," the teaching of Marx and Engels on this point. It is true that it was attempted until recently to maintain a uniform salary for Communists; but now this has been abandoned, and Communists, like other people, are divided into several categories and paid in proportion to their services.

But Lenin himself had not only got outside class society, he had got also beyond the kind of society where inequalities of ability are unequally remunerated. I was told by the wife of a Commissar of her calling on Krupskaya in the Kremlin. There were no comforts in the apartment, she said; no ornaments, except pictures of Lenin. Preoccupied from her student days with workers' education and agitation, after a lifetime of meager and impermanent lodgings in all the countries of Europe, having lost long ago with Lenin, in concentration on their all-demanding vigilance for the fate of human society as a whole, any sense of her own right as a human being to beauty or recreation or rest, now, at sixty-six, her cause brought to victory, with those who had never had anything and whom she had labored to set free, enjoying their little luxuries and amenities and herself at last lodged in security under the golden spires of the Kremlin, she seemed never to have noticed her furniture, never to have looked at her walls. To such a deliverance from material things the materialist conception of history had led! It was characteristic of Lenin as of Marx—it was the mainspring of the whole Marxist system—that he was impatient of a world in which the things that men needed were reckoned in terms of money and went always to the highest bidder. And he insisted in the very act of seizing power that all he was doing was being done in the name of a day when neither capitalist dollars nor socialist rubles would have value. The Soviet Union is still far from that day; the people still work for money, and even the governing groups still work for more money than their neighbors. But they know that their state is not dedicated, as the capitalist governments are, to the mere preservation of the status quo in the interest of a propertied class. It is based on the bare walls and plain furniture of Lenin's and Krupskaya's lodgings.

I had gone to say goodbye to an American friend at a hotel and found there a Russian whom I also knew. We had some brandy, and I told them about the Red Army party. There had been an old-timer with a big black beard who had made a resounding speech, and his image and echo were still with me. Presently, apropos of nothing but the brandy, I repeated one of his phrases: *"Ili sotsializm ili fascizm!"* ("Either socialism or fascism!") "Don't say that!" exclaimed the Russian. "What is there objectionable about it?" I asked. "It's from a speech at the Red Army entertainment." "Never talk politics in hotel rooms!" he said—and added, "Microphone!" I left almost immediately afterwards and did not see him again, so never had a chance to ask him why he had been worried by what I had said. I am still wondering why a phrase which certainly represents one of the commonplaces of current Soviet thought should be all right for a Communist speech but dangerous for a private conversation.

The strongest impression one gets in Russia as soon as one begins to see beneath the contradictory

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phenomena of the surface, is one of extraordinary heroism.

And the effect of this is very sobering. Only idiots gush about Russia. Only idiots pretend that life there is easy. Whether one encounters a Communist official working his head off to make socialism succeed in the face of inertia at home and hostile pressure abroad, or a professional man or woman of the old bourgeoisie or nobility, who has lost property, position and family, who lives always more or less under suspicion and who is likely already to have done time in a construction camp or a prison, yet who still remains loyal to the Revolution; or a member of the Komsomol intoxicating himself with work and study; or a peasant woman applying herself with desperate seriousness to the duties of ticket-taker or railroad conductor; or an old doctor or an old farmer deprived of everything he had spent his life attaining, yet still sticking with all decency to *his* job, in the interests of a future he will never see, of benefits he will never share; or a cultivated and charming young woman grown up amid the anarchy of the Civil Wars and the Spartan years of the first phase of the Revolution with no dancing and no pretty clothes and breaking down her physique and her nerves under the exactions of the Soviet programs—whomever one sees, wherever one turns, one is made to feel the terrible seriousness of what is being done in Russia and the terrible cost which it requires.

And on the other hand, it is as foolish for a foreigner to make an issue of the bad aspects of the dictatorship: the lack of democratic procedure, the suppression of political opposition, the constraint of the official terror. The Russian can always reply that, with all the machinery of our democratic institutions, we are unable to feed and clothe our people, and that these supposed democratic institutions are merely illusions to divert our attention from observing that the government and the laws in reality work only one way: to protect the profits of the owning classes. This last is, I believe, not quite true: I feel convinced, since I have been in Russia, that American republican institutions, disastrously as they are always being abused, have some permanent and absolute value. I don't believe that they will necessarily be destroyed in the course of the transformation of society, any more than our advanced "technique," but think it probable that they will, on the contrary, like it, make the transition to socialism easier. But we shall be in no position to reprove the Russians till we shall be able to show them an American socialism which is free from the Russian defects.

And in the meantime, in spite of these defects, you feel in the Soviet Union that you are at the moral top of the world where the light never really goes out, just as you know in the Gulf of Finland, where the summer day never ends, that you are close to the geographical top. The central fact, from which one never can escape, which one is always stumbling upon under all the fluid surface of the casualness, the frivolity, the timidity, the evasiveness, the inexactitude, the apathy, of some aspects of Russian life, is the relationship of the Russian people to the tomb under the Kremlin wall. Day after day, rain or shine, the people line up and wait for hours in slowly advancing queues that loop back and forth across Red Square, in order to go into the tomb, to step down past the walls of Ural marble, black and gray and sown with flakes of lapis lazuli like blue silken butterflies' wings, and to stare for a moment at that face, where the soldier with his bayonet stands staring.

It is not the face you expect if you have looked at pictures and statues, and it is different even from the death-mask. But, in shrinking, the flesh has brought out qualities, fundamental as the fine grain of wood, which are also strikingly apparent in the mask. We are used to seeing Lenin represented, as he must usually have been during his waking life, determined, intent, energetic, arguing, explaining, imposing himself; and in the death-mask we are still made aware of the aggressive intellect of the boxlike skull which seems always to be tilted forward: the nose and lips are still rather thick, the eyebrows sharply bristling. The casts of the hands show finely tapering but effective square-tipped fingers. But the head in the tomb, with its high forehead, its straight nose, its pointed beard (which has grown gray on the dead man's cheeks), its sensitive nostrils and eyelids, gives an impression in some ways strangely similar to that one gets from the supposed death-mask of Shakespeare. It is a beautiful face, of exquisite fineness; and—what surely proves sufficiently its authenticity—it is profoundly aristocratic. Yet it is an aristocrat who is not specialized as an aristocrat, a poet who is not specialized as a scientist. Nor is it in the least the face of a saint. Except for the slightly slanting eyes, it seems today hardly even the face of a Russian. For here humanity has produced, independent of all the old disciplines, the scientist whose study is humanity, the poet whose material is not images but the water and salt of human beings—the superior man who has burst out of the classes and claimed all that man has done which is superior for the refinement of mankind as a whole. And here we come to gaze down at this shell of flesh, in its last thinness, its delicacy and fragility, before it crumbles and loses the mold—this bone and skin still keeping the stamp of that intellect, that passion, that will, whose emergence has stunned the world almost with more embarrassment at being made to expand its conception of what man, as man alone, can accomplish, than admiration at the achievements of genius. And these countrymen of his are amazed, with their formless and expressionless faces, when they look down on him and know that he was one of them, and that he invoked from their loose and sluggish plasm all those triumphs to which life must rise and to which he thought himself the casual guidepost.

EDMUND WILSON.

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New Jersey Tries Starvation

The Meaning of the "Siege of Trenton"

THE HUSHED newspaper accounts of the "siege" of Trenton by several hundred unemployed workers who took over the State Capitol on April 21 and held it for nine days will serve, as time goes by, to distinguish rather than to obscure what is unquestionably a unique event in our history. Let there be no mistake about what happened. Unemployed workers displaced constituted authorities virtually without challenge, while legislators either withdrew to their homes or caucused in nearby hotels and clubs. The frequent exchanges of statements by leaders of the legislature and the unemployed were marked, in general, by the stiff cordiality of enemy commanders negotiating an armistice on equal terms. Clearly this assembly of half-starved unemployed, determined upon forcing a recalcitrant legislature to provide them with enough to keep body and soul together, was attempting something new in the perilous struggles of the Forgotten Man to find the place that the great Good Neighbor had supposedly reserved for him.

The background of the "siege" is as significant as the event it produced. There is little doubt that the Liberty League and its allies seized upon New Jersey as a test case in the attempt to reduce drastically the amount of relief now being extended to the unemployed throughout the nation. Remembering that New Jersey is ruled jointly by Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City and the gigantic Public Service Corporation (in turn controlled, it is reported, by J. P. Morgan and Company), and that Hague is the partner-in-arms of Al Smith, Liberty Leaguer No. 1, the availability of the state as a laboratory and of its 270,000 unemployed citizens as guinea pigs can easily be pictured.

The stage for the test was set last October when a sales tax, the income from which was used to defray a large part of the expenditure for relief, was repealed in response to popular dissatisfaction with its operation. This dissatisfaction was raised to a high pitch by the Hague machine, which rode to power on the promise to revoke the tax, although its votes had enacted the measure into law. From October on, the relief situation grew increasingly desperate, with the Legislature, controlled by Hague and Public Service, refusing either to appropriate funds for relief or to enact tax legislation that would provide the necessary money. The eve of the convening of the legislature on April 20 was marked by extreme tension among the unemployed throughout the state. Under the leadership of the reorganized Workers' Alliance of America, whose merger with the National Unemployment Councils and three other unemployed workers' organizations on April 8 had given it a membership of 800,000 in forty-two states, demonstrations were held in front of city and town halls, during which the unemployed called upon the Legislature to enact new tax laws that would ensure the maintenance of relief. The answer of the State Relief Council, apparently timed to serve as a reply to the demonstrations, was that it would discontinue its operations entirely on April 16 and allow the burden of relief to fall on the state's 564 municipalities, many of which are on the point of bankruptcy. It is doubtful that a single New Jersey town has money enough to provide adequate relief.

At this juncture The New York Herald Tribune, most articulate of the Liberty League's daily spokesmen, drew aside the curtain that had been concealing the experiment from public view. In its leading editorial on April 18, under the caption "New Jersey Sets the Fashion," The Tribune congratulated the state for dissolving its relief apparatus, and then went on to say:

> There is, of course, talk . . . of local demonstrations of the unemployed at town halls. . . . It is to be most sincerely hoped that such demonstrations do not move the Legislature to interfere again . . . with such a test of the relief situation as every state in the Union wishes every other would have the courage to make. . . . New Jersey will be well advised to tackle the job courageously, using this opportunity to earn and enjoy the distinction of setting the fashion.

But this experiment in starvation met with a sort of opposition that had not been foreseen by the experimenters. About two weeks before the New Jersey Legislature convened in Trenton, another representative body had assembled in Washington, D. C., where the major organizations of the unemployed had decided to amalgamate into one body. This fortunate union had infused new strength into the unemployed workers of New Jersey—with the result that the test of the Liberty League was also to be a test of the new Workers' Alliance.

The nine-day "siege" that drove the legislators out of their seats in the State House was not planned in advance. The evening before the siege ended, I met John Spain Jr., secretary of the New Jersey division of the Workers' Alliance, who had been unanimously elected speaker of the rump House. I asked him how the siege had started. He explained that with twenty-one other members of the Workers' Alliance, all residents of Trenton, he was sitting in the gallery of the House while the legislators droned through the first hours of the new

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session. When the Speaker moved to adjourn for the day without raising the question of relief, the twenty-two were stunned, for they knew the opening session would provide the keynote of the Legislature's relief program. When the legislators left their seats the twenty-two did what seemed to them almost unnatural not to do: they occupied the still warm seats and announced they would continue to hold them until the Legislature decided to enact measures designed to remedy the catastrophic relief situation in the state. While the somewhat dazed Assemblymen and custodians debated a course of action, word of the event spread like wildfire throughout the city. Within a half-hour the remaining thirty-eight seats in the House were filled with unemployed workers. By midnight scores of unemployed men and women were filing into galleries and aisles in response to telegrams dispatched by the rump legislators to Workers' Alliance branches in every part of the state. By Monday, April 27, 7,000 were assembled in and outside the State House. On the twenty-sixth, after the congregations of the sixty-odd Protestant Churches in Trenton had voted to support the rump legislature, the local Council of Churches swung behind the unemployed, to be followed immediately by the Teachers' Union and the Agricultural Workers' Union of South Jersey. The Communist and Socialist Parties of New Jersey had supported the rump legislators from the first and members of both parties did their utmost to maintain their morale.

Constituting themselves a new Assembly of the state of New Jersey, the unemployed elected Spain, a construction worker who had been jobless for three years, as their leader and proceeded to carry on the business of lawmakers, taking time off occasionally to burlesque the legislators whose seats they occupied. The speeches during the course of the nine-day session were calculated to chill the blood of professional politicians everywhere, for if ever our governmental apparatus was stripped bare of its charlatanry, these unemployed workers, by simply stating their common needs and then setting about solving the problems presented, accomplished the deed.

It may have been the grim experience of watching themselves parodied by sane human beings that prevented the constituted authorities from unleashing the hundred state policemen surrounding the State House against the "insurrectionists." It may have been the realization that a brutal handling of the rump Assembly would merely have focused the eyes of the nation more clearly on an event that might be kept in the background by permitting the unemployed to leave through sheer weariness. In any case, when the unemployed finally retired from the State House they did so in good order, confident that their major objectives would before long be won. For, in the final analysis, the experiment of the Liberty League and its friends in New Jersey must fail, and for the following reasons:

First, it is clear from the guarded statement issued by the leaders of the Legislature that, when the Legislature convenes again after the primaries in May, relief funds for the unemployed will be provided from the sum set aside annually for old-age relief, the maintenance of dependent children and the soldiers' bonus. The statement in question implies that new taxes will be imposed to replace the funds diverted to general relief from these three sources. But since the Legislature has proved time and again that it will never, if it can possibly avoid it, enact new tax legislation, it is obvious that the unorganized needy will be forced to pay the cost of relief for the organized needy.

Second, the experience of the unemployed during their occupation of the State House has driven them away from both the Democratic and Republican Parties and toward the immediate formation of a statewide Farmer-Labor Party. In the complicated political set-up that exists in the state, even a small Farmer-Labor representation could play havoc with the present Hague-Public-Service machine.

Finally, the cynicism that both major parties have displayed towards the plight of the more than 270,000 persons in the state who face starvation will spread disillusionment with the governmental apparatus as it now functions; for there is no brick wall that separates the employed from the unemployed. Moreover, the interests of the American people are easily as broad as those of the Liberty League and other Tories, and if these wanted to use the experiment in New Jersey to bring home a lesson to the legislatures of other states, the population of those states will surely learn a lesson to their own liking from the experience of the Trenton "insurrectionists." We call the attention of the Liberty League, and of The New York Herald Tribune, to the announcement, made while the rump legislature was in session, that the Allied Farmers of Kansas intend to undertake occupation of their own state capitol.

Trenton, N. J. ALLAN JOHNSON.

Yesterday Snow

Yesterday snow, high piled on the black branches;
This morning robins where the snow had perched,
Frogs peeping in the swamps, woodchucks alert
Beside their holes, the sentinels of spring.

In hip boots the fishermen slouch by
Thinking with nervous wrists the first clean cast;
Also the plowman's eyes are dim with trout-swirl.

How many springs gone by, how many suns
From clouds outburrowing like April woodchucks,
How many plans for the ripe corn, for the flowers
Frost-faded in how many autumns!
Tell me,
Swamp peepers, meadow robins, tell me now
How many springs?

MALCOLM COWLEY.

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Washington Notes

The Two Landons—Alf as the Great Manipulator—Mr. Hamilton Is Hasty —The Boss-Ridden G.O.P.

AS MIGHT be expected, travel is now heavy between Governor Landon's office at Topeka, Kansas, and Washington. Perhaps the chief impression created here by the talk of his supporters is that of Mr. Landon's political realism. Listening to their shirt-sleeve, hotel-room conversation, you get the feeling that there are two men back in Kansas, Politician Landon and Candidate Landon. Of the two, Politician Landon seems the more worth watching.

According to his supporters, Politician Landon cherishes few illusions about the astonishing progress of his campaign, and plays a steady jet of cold water on Candidate Landon's hopes. Politician Landon thinks that the enthusiasm for himself in Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa, all farm states, and in Oklahoma, an oil state, is genuine. On the other hand, he believes that the pro-Landon sentiment east of the Mississippi is wholly self-interested and undependable.

Politician Landon, I am assured, has taken great pains to inform himself of the political truth about each state. He recognizes that nearly all Eastern delegates who have committed themselves to him have done so because a state boss was afraid of Senator Borah, or because one leader wished to displace another—as, for example, ex-Ambassador Edge wishes to displace Governor Hoffman in New Jersey. He also feels that his advantages as a candidate of the Middle West are not appreciably greater than those of Senator Vandenberg and half a dozen others.

In the light of these facts, Politician Landon seems to have reached the conclusion that at Cleveland he cannot hope to hold more than a hundred of the delegates now pledged to him beyond the third ballot. Sometime before then, he must enter into a bargain with either Senator Borah, Colonel Knox or the Eastern bloc led by Messrs. Hilles, Roraback and Reed. His friends give the strong suggestion that Politician Landon, on behalf of Candidate Landon, is now open to offers concerning the Secretaryship of the Treasury, or the Attorney-Generalship.

For several weeks a nasty smear-Landon campaign has been in progress here. It seems chiefly the work of sympathizers of Senator Borah, although the Senator has had no part in it. It is being whispered that Mr. Landon is being backed by sinister forces, the revelation of which, when it occurs, will destroy his eligibility. The sole definite allegation, however, is that pro-Landon groups in certain states have received contributions from Mr. Harry Sinclair. You will recall that Mr. Sinclair once had some difficulty over government oil leases and was forced to spend a brief period in the hoosegow. I have placed this accusation before a man directly concerned in Mr. Landon's campaign. In effect, his answer is (a) that Mr. Landon has not received a contribution from Mr. Sinclair, (b) that if he has, it is only a very little one, and (c) that, in any case, Mr. Sinclair is greatly esteemed in Kansas and other states for his part in forcing the big corporations to open their pipe-lines to the small producers, and no man ought to be condemned for a misdeed of nearly fifteen years ago.

The explanations of Mr. Landon's supporters provide an answer to the conundrum—which has greatly bothered Washington—of whether he is a reactionary or a liberal. Kansans who have known him longest say delightedly that he has no irrevocable convictions whatever. He is a born manipulator. His gift is to enter a group of people, organize them in support of a given action, and see that the action is completed. He has been doing this since he was a youth, with great skill. What the action is, however, seems to be of little consequence. If he were President, his friends insist that he would obtain and keep the good will of the chief figures among business men, organized labor and the farmers, and that, mysteriously, they would find themselves supporting the Landon administration's program. His friends agree that this sounds very like the early Roosevelt, but say that, where Mr. Roosevelt has the reputation of being a Great Manipulator, Mr. Landon really is one. They are at pains to deny the general concept of Mr. Landon as righteously opposed to federal relief. Not at all, these friends say. In the farm states, where the W.P.A. is widely regarded as scandalous, he would abolish it; in the big cities, where federal relief, if not the W.P.A., is regarded as a necessity, it would remain.

An acute problem confronting Mr. Landon is that of Mr. John D. M. Hamilton, the ex-boy-wonder of Kansas and the official Landon campaign manager. From the start, Mr. Landon has been in fact his own campaign manager, but Mr. Hamilton is Republican National Committeeman for Kansas, and a conspicuous title had to be found for him. Mr. Hamilton's chief exploit so far has been his singlehanded attempt, two weeks ago, to make Mr. C. Wayland (Curly) Brooks, war hero and candidate for Governor of Illinois, the temporary chairman of the Cleveland convention. Mr. Landon and his closest advisers knew, and had known for a month, that the Eastern bloc under Mr. Hilles intended to name Senator Steiwer. Rather than risk a setback, the Landon group was ready to accept him. Mr. Hamilton had other, bolder ideas. In one splendid coup, he proposed to elect Mr. Brooks, make Mr. Hilles eat crow, and establish Mr. Landon's supremacy in the Republican Party. Unfortunately he forgot to count noses in the Republican National Committee, and had to disavow Mr. Brooks before the Committee met.

The Washington corps of correspondents, especially those representing Republican newspapers, has attempted to describe Mr. Steiwer's selection to make the keynote speech at Cleveland as an evidence of the new liberalism of the Republican Party. The leftward tendency of Mr. Steiwer is supposed to be established by the leaning of his state, Oregon, towards Senator Borah. The fact is, however, that Mr. Steiwer's state boss, Mr. Ralph E. Williams, is one of the oldest, closest associates of Mr. Hilles. Far from being a Borah partisan, Mr. Steiwer is a potential presidential candidate of the Eastern reactionaries. The other speech-maker chosen for Cleveland, Representative Snell, the House minority leader, is Mr. Hilles' own man. The industriously circulated reports that Mr. Hilles and his Wall Street constituency no longer rule the Republican organization seem to be premature.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Other People's Money

How Will the Tax on Surpluses Work?
—A Break for Big Stockholders
—Subsidizing Corporations

SINCE Mr. Roosevelt's induction into office, liberals and even radicals have swallowed, without so much as a hiccup, most of the weird proposals he has offered the country, because the President served them completely immersed in a rich sauce of revolutionary rhetoric. These folk are by no means cured. They have gulped down his latest tax bill for no better reason than that it seems to be an attack on corporations, on "surpluses," on wealth.

The main feature of this new bill is its tax upon undistributed corporate surpluses. Of course corporate surpluses should be taxed. But beyond that Mr. Roosevelt knows that these indefensible accumulations are a sore spot with the liberal and radical groups. If he does not think clearly on social and economic problems, he does think, if not clearly, at least very busily, in terms of political values. He knows, therefore, that in advance of an election in which he is being opposed by the rich corporate leaders to whom he made such vehement but futile love, a tax seemingly aimed at these corporate surpluses would look good to the liberals, with whom he has played fast and loose.

But what is the true significance of this tax bill? The government needs money. It looks about for sources of taxation. It sees, what has been apparent for a long time, that corporations can, by not distributing their earnings, enable those earnings to escape certain existing taxes. The corporation earnings are subject to a tax of 15 percent. But when they are distributed in the form of dividends they are not subject to taxation in the hands of the taxpayer unless his total net taxable income is more than $4,000. Then, while they are not subject to the normal tax of four percent, they are subject to the surtax. So if a corporation does not distribute its earnings, the earnings escape the surtax. How much the government loses by this each year, I do not know, but it must run into hundreds of millions.

Certainly every critic of privileged wealth will be in favor of correcting this. Indeed, many intelligent conservatives will concede that it should be corrected. This is a perfectly legitimate and, in periods of prosperity, fruitful source of taxes. Therefore there ought to be no objection to a tax bill that would impose on these undistributed earnings a tax sufficient to recover for the government the sums it loses by the device of non-distribution.

If the President had proposed this, therefore, there could be no criticism. But why, in order to do this, is it necessary also to abolish the existing corporation taxes? Why, indeed, when by doing so, the President sacrifices an important gain in the long struggle to tax profits?

To be clear about this, let us summarize a few well known facts. The individual pays a normal income tax of four percent. On all net taxable earnings over $4,000 he pays a surtax increasing with his income. Corporations pay a normal tax of 15 percent on their net earnings, with an excess-profits tax that is larger where earnings are over $10,000.

In effect this means that the stockholder's share in the earnings of his corporation (which is sheer profit) is subject to a normal tax of 15 percent, while his personal earnings—wages, interest or profit—are subject to a normal tax of 4 percent. This represents a definite gain for the proposition that a man's earnings from his corporation dividends ought to be more heavily taxed than his earnings from his personal activities whether as a wage-earner or enterpriser. But this principle Mr. Roosevelt now proposes to discard. From the earliest income-tax laws this principle has been recognized. If it were brought forward now for the first time, the Liberty League would call it a damnable attack upon property and human rights. But fortunately it has been accepted through usage by the most reactionary administrations. Yet Mr. Roosevelt, in order to put over a tax on undistributed earnings, asks Congress to abolish this gain, even though it is utterly unnecessary.

It is entirely possible to retain this 15-percent corporate normal tax and impose in addition a tax on corporate surpluses sufficient to make up the amount lost in surtaxes by non-distribution. In addition the President could ask for excess-profits taxes. Certainly the stockholder whose earnings from his shares are 50 percent or 100 percent ought to be more heavily taxed than the stockholder who gets only 3, 4 or 5 percent. Of course it will be objected that excess-profits taxes are too easily evaded. But every excess-profits-tax evasion is possible in the case of the undistributed surplus tax, with a few new forms of evasion to boot.

The tax bill is, therefore, a deplorable bill and ought to be either amended or defeated.

But there are some other queer little tricks in it. Imagine two corporations—A and B. Both earn $1,000,000 this year. Corporation A has no debts, no bond issues. The company has been doing business on its own funds, wisely and well. Corporation B is up to its neck in debt. It owes $5,000,000—bonds, debentures, current accounts. It has an accumulated surplus of $1,000,000. Its debts are therefore $4,000,000 more than its surplus. It announces that it will amortize this $4,000,000 of debt in five years. That means $800,000 a year. Now see how these two corporations are taxed under the bill. Neither corporation distributes any earnings. Corporation A holds its funds to build new plant, buy new machines, extend its business. Corporation B holds its earnings to pay its old debts. Under this bill Corporation A will pay a tax of $425,000; Corporation B will pay a tax of $265,000. Corporation B, because it is in debt, is given a tax subsidy of $165,000 by the government to enable it to pay its debts. Its competitors and all other taxpayers are, of course, more heavily taxed in order to pay the debts of corporations that owe too much money. Of all the subsidies proposed by the Roosevelt Revolution this should be given the Brown Derby.

I have, out of the intricate and bewildering verbiage of the bill, attempted to calculate the taxes to be paid by stockholders under it. Most stockholders in the ten and twenty-thousand-dollar classes will actually have their taxes reduced. This, I suggest, is a fine time to reduce the taxes of stockholders in that class.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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The Dead and the Living

"THE GREAT ZIEGFELD" is about how Flo the Showman started as the son of a respectable musician, barking for a muscle-man act on the World's Fair midway, how he went from a shoestring to dazzlements in the Broadway theatre, and back to the shoestring, and back again to greater dazzlements, making stars and marrying women; how he got old and broke and died that way, leaving over the street a legend that is brighter than the lights. We have had romanticized biographies of show people before, but this is apart from them in scale if nothing else: three solid hours of tunes, girls, specialty numbers and all the bustle of people and events in the lean and fat years of a national figure. The movie is fantastic, yet curiously appropriate, its atmosphere matching the topsy-turvy reality of all this blare and tinsel. Too glib for real life, it is persuasive for all that—possibly just because of that.

To take Ziegfeld as legend, as he was felt across the footlights and known to stars in ascendancy, the picture would properly be something like this, full of glamorous types, color, brash spectacularism. The only other way to do such a figure—why and how he did it, what it took from the country and what it left—would be to do a book, to be more sober and thorough and first-causey—and inevitably to lose the principal radiance identified with the name. Of one whose energies dazzled the eyes and ears of an immediate (also fleeting) moment, it would be rather barren to write a book: the truth would be truer and more precisely gauged, but to those who had known the blandishments it would be partly false, the statistics of moonshine without its magic, and who cares anyhow.

"The Great Ziegfeld" is full of many matters, too many for recounting and certainly too many for its own good. Even if it didn't run on forever, there is no excuse for the lag in the first part, the long-drawn-out death, the stage-spectacle material in the last half, etc. And since it does run on, everything should have been tightened —not in the tremendous job of cutting those miles of negative, but in boiling down the script, saving a line here, combining two scenes into one there.

The best acting part is that of Luise Rainer, whose Anna Held is gay, touching and just about right, though probably not Anna Held. William Powell is a plausible Ziegfeld, dressy, flashy, mostly surface; and for solid support there are Fannie Brice, Frank Morgan, Reginald Owen, Ernest Cossart, etc. The story has nice fun and sentiment, but its setting and numbers are even more important to its effect, one bit of gorgeous flummery standing out above all: the "Pretty Girl" number, serving as a first-act curtain and also as an example of the best to be done anywhere—a revolving stage, surmounted by a great spiral staircase that sweeps up, covered with girls, as the circular curtain rises and the spiral turns, the spectacle spreading to a climax. In the end it is this general atmosphere of hysterical lavishness and aimless splendor that stands out from "The Great Ziegfeld"—the unreal made actual by our knowledge that such things *did* happen here, and that there is a like fever of aimless glitter and lavishness still in the world—people building the pyramids for a night, the Hanging Gardens for a finale, Ziegfeld's ghost having apparently gone west.

Footnote to the foregoing and supplement to a previous piece on Joris Ivens.—All we see of the three-reel film Ivens was commissioned to make by a Dutch radio factory ("Industrial Symphony"), is a reel of excerpts. Which means that we lose not only the complete conception, but also continuity; and yet it is a beautiful piece of imaginative photography, demonstrating with simple eloquence how a single camera, with some definite genius behind it, can find in the coverage of everyday facts more shining wonders than all those prodigious sets and mobs could put before the cameras of "Ziegfeld" and "Things to Come."

At the start of "Industrial Symphony" there is an effective contrast: the massive steel forms of automatic blowers over against the new glass, bright and delicate in bubbles, taking shape, moving off down conveyor slots. Then as the mysterious processes of making and assembling a radio tube go on in the factory, the inexorable movement of these traveling belts and tireless human grotesques of machines begins to be felt as a weight bearing down on the people at their work, intent to desperation. And the thousands and thousands of parts flow or soberly pirouette along, and finally the camera swings over the lines of glassware racks, geometric, precise, finished and beyond counting, almost an explosion of intricately refracted light.

The final sequence is where Ivens shows most clearly that base on which he can safely build whatever beauties of abstract design may suit his purpose: his highly developed feeling for the way work is shaped by, and felt in, those doing it. The major qualities of love, death, fear, hatred, etc., do not register in this film, having no place in it; but the major attitude of men to their work is rendered finely when we come to the glass blowers. Everything about them is brought out by the camera's shifting from the man against the background to the braced bones, the flex of muscles, the hands almost a caress on the whirling blowpipe, the facial expression and sweat of the man himself. Ivens said the other day he wouldn't think of photographing work with a crowbar until he had gone through the action himself, to find where the strain came and where a picture of it would sum up the whole movement. And you can see how this materializes in the final sequence, where is shown the dean and basso profundo of all glass blowers, puffing and moving back in an epic trance of concentration and evident anxiety, his cheeks filling out like basketballs, his eyes straining for a sign from the great glass bubble, which grows with the blowing and rounds smoothly as the pipe whirls; and finally the job is done and this hulking man looks it over, his face still carved with fierce care and effort, his body molded with sweat.

Ivens' films are beautifully photographed and joined, but documentary as they are, they are also alive with a feeling for people. Not people done in the weird realism of snapshots seen in the papers—somebody walking, running, falling in an attitude the eye never registered—they are as real and meaningful as created characters. And so his factory, with the men and machines and miracle of their industry in it, becomes fascinating and rather terrible, touched with meanings that go beyond statistics and blue prints, and even (granting you put one part of imagination with the part supplied in these fragmentary hints) beyond the books it would take to express them in concrete words.

OTIS FERGUSON.

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The Bandwagon

"Poets, song writers and dreamers for the past ten years have given their genius to the automobile, the movies, the radio and the airplane," Mr. Reynolds lamented. "They have not been singing of the home, and that is one reason why there are still about 12,000,000 unemployed in America."—*Richard S. Reynolds, who called upon a group of newspaper and magazine writers to glorify home ownership in poetry, song and story. Quoted in The New York Times.*

No more despotic legislation has ever been offered than that of this so-called "Child Labor Amendment," which makes it a felony for any person eighteen years of age to perform any kind of manual labor. . . .

The Congress shall have power to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age.—*Two quotations from an address by Mrs. Jesse W. Nicholson at the convention of the National Sentinels at the Washington Hotel, Washington, D. C., April 13. The second of these is Mrs. Nicholson's quotation of Sec. 1 of the proposed Child Labor Amendment.*

Last of the red-painted signs announcing that "Jews are our misfortune—whoever buys from Jews is a traitor" were removed today from all public places in Berlin.

Removal of the sign is part of a movement recently inaugurated to eliminate all awkward manifestations of anti-Semitism in this city in preparation for the Olympic Games next summer.—*Berlin dispatch published in The New York World-Telegram.*

Heading the long list of executive errors and political bungling that have marked Governor Horner's thirty-eight months in Springfield has been his failure to supplant high-priced Republicans in key positions. . . .

With many of the down-state precinct committeemen in need of employment, reports from every section indicate a decided resentment against Horner's betrayal of the workers who campaigned in his behalf.—*From The Public Service Leader and Illinois Jeffersonian.*

The American Student Union is dominated by communistic organizations, Y.M.C.A. groups, and similar undesirable elements.—*Margaret Ann Hogan, secretary of the College Catholic Clubs (Newman clubs), quoted in The Student Advocate.*

I have entered stores and bought something I did not want just because I saw pickets parading in front of the places. And in this connection it occurs to me to wonder what would happen if employers against whom strikes were called should picket the homes of their striking employees. Think it over and let us read a few thoughts about picketing.—*From a letter in The New York Sun.*

We must keep America whole and safe and unspoiled. We must keep the worker away from Red literature and Red ruses; we must see that his mind remains healthy.—*Al Capone, quoted in "Fascism and Social Revolution," by E. Palme Dutt.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address the Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

America's Entry into the War

SIR: In the review by Mr. C. Hartley Grattan in your issue of March 11 of the book "American Neutrality: 1914-17," by Charles Seymour, the reviewer quotes a paragraph from the book which ends with this sentence: "Without the submarine we should not have entered the War, whatever other circumstances were operative."

Is it possible that in all of the recent discussion of the causes of our entry into the War an incident has been overlooked that impressed me deeply when I first read it in the newspapers? This incident had to do with the call of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate upon President Wilson about the time the Versailles Treaty was under consideration by the Senate. As I recall the conversation as written in the newspapers, Senator Borah asked the President directly if we should have entered the War irrespective of the German resumption of the offending submarine practices, to which Mr. Wilson replied that we should have so entered in all probability. Comment, as a result, was very bitter in Germany, and confirmed them in their belief that other causes were the impelling forces.

I have never heard mentioned since, nor read in the recent investigation by the Senate Munitions Committee, any account of it, and it may be that it had not the significance I attached to it at the time and still do.

Kansas City, Mo. J. B. DELANEY.

[In the Munitions investigation, files of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were introduced containing the following colloquy:

Senator McCumber: Do you think that if Germany had committed no act of war or no act of injustice against our citizens that we would have gotten into the war?

President Wilson: I think so.

Senator McCumber: You think that we would have gotten in anyway?

President Wilson: I do.—THE EDITORS.]

Income-Tax Statement

SIR: After boresome perusal of article after article upon the projected surplus tax, in periodicals of all shades of red and black, I am impelled to ask a question. (Your paper has been chosen as the one most likely to afford an answer.) *What is the sense in all this shilly-shallying about tax when everybody with a modicum of reason knows that the small-income consumer will pay it anyway?*

Look at the record! The income tax was going to take the bone from the big dog; and what happened? High-gear legal minds figured out plenty of ways to avoid, evade or otherwise render it innocuous. Barons of boodle sold each other stocks at huge paper losses which were written off against taxable incomes; other pirates used profits to capitalize paper corporations—one financial prestidigitator of international notoriety was thus enabled to escape, in the banner year of the depression, paying any income tax at all. And most amazing of all, a high Treasury official who shall be nameless actually borrowed from the internal revenue department an up-and-coming statistical expert to figure out ways to side-step *his* income tax. Said ways were found: eleven of them! One need

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hardly mention the most elementary method of all—adding a bit to price and letting the buyer do the rest.

And so again to the question. Why not face the facts? Let us say to the Solons on Capitol Hill, "Hand it to us, we can take it as we have, lo these many years." That would hush all this hypocritical cant of the financial wizards that peep and mutter, and it might conceivably clear the atmosphere, even in an election year.

Washington, N. J. J. S. M.

[While many evasions of income taxes have been practised, they have never been so effectual as to prevent these taxes from yielding large sums. A number of the loopholes have been stopped by recent legislation. The surplus-profits tax would stop one of the biggest. It is the reactionaries who usually argue that income and profits taxes are passed on to the consumer; most economists would agree that they are not. The most we can raise from incomes and profits, the less we shall have to raise from tariffs, excise and sales taxes, which do bear more heavily on the poor.—THE EDITORS.]

Criticizing a Critic

SIR: Edmund Wilson's articles on Russia are a terrible hodge-podge. The valuable impressionistic insights one gains from them might have been put in story form without the meanderings concerning Russian politics, most of which are inaccurate if checked with the Webbs' recent study, "Soviet Communism." . . . The scenes in ugly-looking hotels, the views of drabness, are portrayed in the individualistic key Wilson analyzed so well in "Axel's Castle." After writing about the bourgeois giants so accurately, he seems to have fallen for their line. The ideals of the people are discounted ("they didn't yet have the future"), so that present discomforts, depicted on a colorless background, stand out much more sharply and in unwarranted disproportion. . . .

Brooklyn, New York City. MORRIS ENGEL.

SIR: Many who have given Edmund Wilson credit for above-par intelligence will no doubt be as disappointed as I that he used so much valuable space in his article, "Stalin as Ikon" (The New Republic, April 15) describing and belittling the Russians for their adoration of Stalin. . . . Is it any wonder that the people of Soviet Russia might more or less worship Stalin for his intelligent leadership toward a new social order of comfort and abundance, especially when the Soviets are making such visible progress in this direction? Would the American people react any differently if a leader should arise tomorrow and lead them out of their present misery and uncertainty? For one, I would cheer him at every opportunity. . . .

Los Angeles, Calif. LEE K. STROBEL.

SIR: As a reader of your magazine, I have been impressed with Mr. Wilson's "Russian Idyls." Permit me, however, to express my surprise at his naïveté when he says "The opponents of socialism can always put down to socialism anything they find objectionable in Russia. The advocates of socialism are betrayed into defending things which are really distasteful to them and which they have no business defending." Has it ever occurred to Mr. Wilson that every nation, no matter how superior it may prove to be culturally, is bound to reveal to opponents of socialism "anything they find objectionable"? Is Mr. Wilson so carried away by the glories of his own nation's superiority as to overlook those human failings now partly inherent and partly the effect of the historical influence of capitalism, apparent in every country and constituting "things which are really distasteful"? . . .

New York City. HERMAN FIELD.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Conrad Komorowski, secretary of the Provisional Committee for Cuba, sends us a copy of the resolution recently adopted by the Cuban Senate calling upon Miguel Gomez, who will assume office on May 20 as Cuba's first constitutionally elected President in three years, to investigate and put an end to the terrorism and murders committed by the military authorities under Colonel Fulgencio Batista. An impressive united front of Cuban leaders, running all the way from the extreme left to liberal-right, is calling for an amnesty for political prisoners and punishment of the persons responsible for the mysterious cases of "suicide" and prisoners "shot while trying to escape" that have taken a toll of fifteen lives since January 1 of the present year. The Provisional Committee for Cuba accuses the United States Ambassador, Jefferson Caffrey, of giving sympathetic support to Colonel Batista and asks persons interested in a free Cuba to write to Secretary of State Hull urging Caffrey's recall.

Irwin D. Hoffman, an American etcher, sends us a copy of a letter to the American Olympic Fine Arts Committee in which he vigorously declines to participate in an exhibition in Germany and recommends that all American artists do likewise in protest against the brutalities of the present Nazi regime. . . . A group of students in the Adult School at 235 East One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, New York City, sends a copy of a petition presented to Mayor LaGuardia requesting the continuance of the present adult educational program. . . . The People's Lobby is backing the resolution submitted by Senator La Follette in Washington calling upon the Senate Committee on Education and Labor to investigate violations of the rights of free speech and assembly and undue interference with the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively.

A committee has been formed in New York City to aid the organization of the Sharecroppers' Union and will welcome contributions sent to Joseph Stevens, Room 301, at 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City. . . . The Brotherhood of Utility Employees of America, from its regional office at 117 West Forty-eighth Street, New York City, is asking for contributions to aid its present campaign to organize the workers of the utility systems in and around metropolitan New York.

Kedarnath Das Gupta, general executive of the World Fellowship of Faiths, calls our attention to the eleventh annual observance of World Peace and Goodwill Week (beginning May 12), which his organization is sponsoring.

Eugene Jolas, editor of Transition, advance-guard magazine now published in America as a quarterly, sends us an announcement of a parallel publication, Vertigral, to be devoted to poetry and rhythmic prose. Editorial offices are at 113 West Forty-second Street, New York City, and the editors will welcome contributions from those "interested in a freer expression than is presented by the usual reactionary attitude of periodicals and the photographic and sociological character of existing verse in the United States."

Belated May Day Poem

With his own petard
On May the foist,
I hope to see
William Randolph Hoist.

New York City. JOE GOULD.

What's on the Air?

King Carol of Rumania will be heard for the first time on American air-waves with a greeting (in English) on the occasion of the Rumanian Independence Day. Sunday, May 10, 12:45 to 1 P. M., C.B.S. and N.B.C.-WEAF.

Dr. J. T. Mason, president of the American Medical Association, at opening of the Association's convention in Kansas City. Monday, May 11, 5:30 to 5:45 P. M., N.B.C.-WEAF.

Dorothy Thompson on the subject, "Analysis of the News," on Women's Radio Review program. Tuesday, May 12, 4 to 4:30 P. M., N.B.C.-WEAF.

Secretary of the Interior Ickes describes "A National Plan for Libraries." Wednesday, May 13, 3:15 to 3:45 P. M., N.B.C.-WJZ.

Former President Herbert Hoover sets forth his ideas of "A Republican Program." Thursday, May 14, 8:30 to 9 P. M., C.B.S.

Attorney General Cummings, speaking from Washington. Friday, May 15, 10 to 10:30 P. M., N.B.C.-WJZ.

Governor Alf M. Landon will address a nationwide radio audience from his home state of Kansas. Monday, May 18, 10 to 10:30 P. M., N.B.C.-WJZ.

Keynote speech at opening of the national convention of the Socialist Party in Cleveland. Saturday, May 23, 12 noon to 1 P. M., N.B.C.-WEAF.

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The Great Doom's Image

Bury the Dead, by Irwin Shaw; and Prelude, developed by members of the Actors' Repertory Company, dialogue arranged by J. Edward Shugrue and John O'Shaughnessy. Ethel Barrymore Theatre, April 18, 1936.

"BURY THE DEAD," the new war play, presents the finest image that has appeared in our theatre this year. A great theatre image is when there is discovered something seen and done in which the central idea is completely expressed, and is revealed without effort, as if creation had fully taken place already and were all exhibited. Not often in drama anywhere do we find so powerful an image as dominates the whole of "Bury the Dead." A myth is created, a veritable fable is established. When these six dead men arise from their graves and refuse to be buried, the imagination is shocked and caught by the sheer sight of them and the light upon them: Possibilities in fear and living variety, nostalgia, and pity, immediately swarm to the full powers of the stage. As theatre image this motif ranks with the entrance of Oedipus with his blinded eyes, in Sophocles' play, with the sleep-walking scene in "Macbeth," with Lear in the storm, with, that is, such consummations of action, the visual and the idea as are rare even in first-rank drama. The idea and the tone, inseparable, are first and last the chief necessity in a drama; the final need for its vitality is the discovery of a strong, full image for their conveyance.

The play opens with a corporal and his men—they are digging a trench for the six dead men stretched out in a semicircle. The trench is far from deep enough, but they complain of the fleas, the late night, the stench. At last the corporal consents to stowing the corpses away. A priest and a rabbi come to say the last office for the dead. And then one of the dead soldiers moans and stands up, and after him the rest, until six have risen. They will not be buried. They have been shut from life against their wills, before they have tasted the life given to every man; and they will not be put away and robbed of the sun, the shining things, the hours and the sweet sounds. The corporal reports this fact to the captain, there are six men who will not lie down and be buried; the captain comes, he also sees—the timing here in the play is excellent, that moment, for example, when one of the dead men offers his cigarettes to a soldier. The captain reports to the generals, sitting with their bottle; they think he is drunk, and order the doctor to look into the case. The doctor reports that the men are dead but will not lie down and be buried. The generals themselves go. The doctor comes as scientist; his arguments, too, are vain. The priest comes, exorcizing the evil spirits, the devil abroad in the world; but his words are only funny in that air of passionate life and immortal desire.

The idea is then hit upon of bringing their women, women being conservative, to persuade these obdurate dead, lest the scandal spread, the army be made to look absurd, the government disgraced, the munitions makers shaken, the whole texture of society mocked, and what not. And so the women are found. The order in which they appear is well contrived. There is the first, the farmer's wife; then a sort of dancing silly young thing; then comes the wife who has taken to drink since her husband's death and now shoots herself before him; then the mother, who rushes away in horror when at last she sees her boy's face; then the sister, who will not stop her brother's hunger for living his life; then the wife who has been unloved, and who because of poverty has never had a child.

In varying motifs, all with the same basis, the six women get nowhere, the dead men will live on in that beloved life whose call and light was never so clear to them as now. At last the story, having been held back for a long time, must appear in the newspapers and on the radio, though the radio merely finds in the instance another proof of the valor and persistence of our American doughboys—one of the good sardonic spots of humor in Mr. Shaw's play. In the end the generals shoot into the line of six dead men, without avail. The very last moment of the play shows the dead men going on; life will not pay the cost of war.

"Bury the Dead" is obviously an anti-war play. By those interested for or against, it may be called a propaganda play. There can be no objection basically to art that is propaganda, but ultimately there is every objection to propaganda that is not art. It can be said to Mr. Shaw's credit—let's get it over now and say that he is only twenty-three, a fact that seems of vast importance to some of his discoverers, though our theatre has numerous dramatists who have been writing for twenty-five years and are not yet fourteen—that he never in the outline or structure of his piece relies on propaganda to hold him up. But the weaknesses of the play do at times proceed from the fact that the statement in itself seems left to do the work without much creation on the author's part. Taken as such, it is only a matter of the audience that happens to be present and of that audience's persuasion, whether "There shall be no more war" is any more deserving as art than is "Eat no meat," or "Be kind to animals." Some of Mr. Shaw's speeches, therefore, are explicit and advocative rather than created or reduced to their due dramatic terms. Too often, to be exact, the dead men are presented as too equally articulate. The chance for diversity and sharp intimacy and passion, to be conveyed in tone—hushed, voluminous, blunt or poignant as the case may be—is thrown away. Too much mere facility not seldom leads the author into the rhythm and air of journalism. In moments where the demands of art are so great as in these dead men's speeches and their women's speeches, the price comes high. It is an unavoidable truth for the artist that he will find his life only by losing it.

I am, doubtless, incapable of appreciating "Prelude," the one-act piece with which the bill opens at the Ethel Barrymore. Everything in it I seem to have agreed with always and to find obvious, and the expressionistic methods—flash-backs, voices, radios, changed lights, dancing, newspapers, and so on, need inspiration lest their familiarity grow banal.

In "Bury the Dead" the performances of the six dead men's women need intensifying, need more concentration technically. And the whole production would gain by a franker theatrical admission, playing all the play's qualities for what they are worth. The best performance in the large company is that of the First Soldier by Mr. John O'Shaughnessy, for its unity, intensity and excitement.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Two Books About the Negro

I HAVE just been reading two competent books on the Negro question, one of them written by a mildly conservative Dutch sociologist and the other by an American Communist trained in Moscow. The two authors, being honest observers, agree on more points than anybody would expect in advance. But they are guided by different metaphors and quite naturally they reach different conclusions.

Dr. Schrieke's metaphor is "the legend of the plantation," which he tells us that he encountered everywhere in his travels through the South. There was one city where he saw a tree looming hugely in the middle of a busy street. He was told that it caused many automobile accidents, but that it could not be chopped down because its task was to remind the Negroes that some rebels of their race had been hanged from its branches many years before. "That tree," he says, "seems to me a symbol of what the Negro problem and the obsession about white prestige are to the South: it roots in the past, it cannot be removed and it blocks the way." The remedy that Dr. Schrieke suggests is for the South to shake itself free from this nightmare. Then it could solve the Negro problem and the poor-white problem simultaneously by developing a "new peasant," who would have enough land to grow "his own food and the feed for his stock. With his fruit, maple syrup, cream and butter, home-cured hams, cereals and vegetables, he will provide himself a healthier and more abundant diet than he has ever known." But the good doctor ends by doubting whether this mild Utopia can ever be achieved—"Will it be possible," he asks, "to break the spell of the plantation legend?"

Mr. James S. Allen, the American Communist, is more scholarly and a great deal more statistical than the foreign man of science. Instead of relying on secondary sources, he writes on the basis of original researches into the records of the Census Bureau and the Department of Agriculture. One point he proves again and again is that Mr. Schrieke's metaphor falls short of the truth. It is not the plantation legend but rather the plantation itself that continues to cast its shadow over the South; the old system has never died. It is not the remembrance of slavery that prevents Negroes from being treated as human beings; rather it is slavery still surviving in the form of crop-liens, wage-liens, vagrancy laws and other measures designed to prolong a condition of peonage. The Civil War might have been the sort of bourgeois-democratic revolution that ended the Middle Ages in France, but its work was never completed. Relations between planter and tenant are still essentially feudal —the sharecropper resembles the medieval serf (and is even more unfortunate because he can be evicted from his land); the share-tenant, who provides his own tools and draft animals, is almost exactly equivalent to the old-French *métayer*.

So far Mr. Allen is altogether convincing. But soon he introduces a metaphor of his own, and one that seems even more questionable than Dr. Schrieke's. The American Negroes, he says, are "an oppressed nation." Their status, in other words, is roughly comparable to that of the Uzbeks, the Tadjiks, the Buryat Mongols and the other oppressed nations of Tsarist Russia. It follows that under a revolutionary government the same methods could be used to set them free: they could be encouraged to form an autonomous Negro republic. And with this introduction, Mr. Allen brings forward the Communist slogan of "self-determination for the Black Belt."

If this slogan is interpreted in a very limited sense, there is much to be said in its favor. Obviously the Negro problem will never be solved in this country until the Negroes gain political rights, including the right of self-government in towns and counties where they outnumber the white inhabitants. Obviously they ought to be fairly represented in Washington. There are very sound arguments, geographical and statistical, for setting up two new states in regions where there is now a vast Negro majority. But Mr. Allen proposes something more than this—he wants an autonomous Negro republic stretching through the Black Belt continuously from southern Maryland to the easternmost counties of Texas. In this extreme sense, his slogan is open to the gravest sort of criticism.

The simple fact is that Mr. Allen's Black Belt does not correspond to any area revealed by the Census Bureau reports. In the South there are two great regions of Negro concentration. One of them begins on the South Carolina coast and stretches westward through Georgia and Alabama (with a foot in Florida and a left arm bent upward into northwestern Mississippi). Another region begins south of Memphis and runs down both banks of the big river; near the mouth of the Yazoo one can travel for twenty or thirty miles without seeing a white face. But these two regions are separated from each other by the central Mississippi uplands, and they are still further separated from the smaller areas of Negro concentration in western Louisiana and southeastern Virginia. In order to show a continuous Black Belt, Mr. Allen had to include many counties where Negroes are less than thirty percent of the population.

But his slogan, as well as being partially inexact, is also ineffective as propaganda. It requires too much explanation to rouse the enthusiasm of Negroes—they have to be told about the Black Belt first, and then about self-determination as practised in the Soviet Union, and their final reaction is likely to be a great doubt whether they like to be regarded as an oppressed minor nationality; they want to be just Americans. The plantation owners will understand the slogan much better, and like it even less, and take their measures accordingly.

Meanwhile it seems to me that Mr. Allen, in his zeal for self-determination, is neglecting the most critical aspect of the Negro question. It is, in short, that the Negroes no longer stand alone. The plantation system has not only survived but has spread from the old Black Belt into other regions where there are very few Negroes—for example, the newly cleared lowlands of eastern Arkansas. Millions of white farmers have become involved in a semi-feudal economy, and some of them have sunk so low that they regard the Black Belt Negroes as an almost privileged caste. The race problem in the South is slowly being transformed into a class problem; the white and the black tenants are beginning to stand together.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

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[1] Alien Americans: A Study of Race Relations, by B. Schrieke. New York: The Viking Press. 219 pages. $2.50.

The Negro Question in the United States, by James S. Allen. New York: International Publishers. 224 pages. $2.

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A.E. and His Poetry

Selected Poems, by A.E. New York: The Macmillan Company. 198 pages. $2.

IT IS more easy to distinguish those who will not be than those who will be interested in A.E.'s poetry. Those who are attracted by novel verse forms, those who are aroused by highly personalized expression, those who take sides in modern conflicts, will find his poetry unrewarding. And even those who are not held to the novel, the personalized, the militant, will find a great deal of it monotonous. In truth, A.E.'s poetry belongs to an age remote from the modern one, and unless we have something in us which has survived from that age we will be interested only now and again in this, which is so impersonal, which makes such little innovation.

It is poetry that is close to the Vedas and the Zoroastrian hymns. How little it has been influenced by the modern world with its religions, its philosophies and its social order! A.E. was aware of all of them, but they never made him dubious about the myth that gave a center to his poetry, the myth that he had evolved for himself. Men were the strayed Heaven-dwellers, the divinities who had descended into chaos to win a new empire for the spirit. "Homeward, Songs by the Way," was the title of his first volume, and it implied a return to remembrance, to the heaven that men had forgotten themselves out of. And the title-poem in his last volume, "The House of the Titans," dealt with the same myth. A.E. would not have been able to sing the hymns of this faith if he did not have a body of faithful to sing them to. In the Hermetic Society of Dublin he had such. Originally a theosophical lodge, this society had departed from the matriarchate of Mrs. Besant and had become permeated with A.E.'s doctrine: the Vedas, the Upanishads, Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine and certain Irish sagas that were susceptible of a mystical interpretation were their sacred books. Practically all the volumes of A.E.'s poems were dedicated to members of this society; they heard them chanted by him as he walked toward the Dublin hills on Sunday forenoons, or in his house on Sunday evenings, in the streets of Dublin or in his office any day or any hour. That they were for a body of faithful, that they were delivered as chants, gives them an inner resemblance to certain Vedic verses and Zoroastrian hymns. A poem like this is in the same spirit as the early Indian or Iranian chants:

> When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
> All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam
> With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;
> I am one with the twilight's dream.
>
> Aye, and deep and deep and deeper let me drink and draw
> From the olden fountain more than light or peace or dream,
> Such primeval being as o'erfills the heart with awe,
> Growing one with the silent stream.

This is a real chant, uplifting with the vowel-sounds that the voice lingers on—"blows," "glow," "deep," "peace," "dream"—a noble religious chant indeed. A.E. was criticized because his verse forms were the accepted ones, because his frequent use of "immemorial," "vastness," "ancient," "dream," "beauty," made such words seem like counters rather than words with a life of their own. It has to be admitted that there is an amount of rhetoric in this poetry. But there is high distinction too: A.E. was an artist as well as a prophet. Take lines like:

> Bearded with dewy grass the mountains thrust
> Their blackness high into the still gray light,
> Deepening to blue: far up the glimmering height
> In silver transience shines the starry dust.

How firm and unswerving these lines are and how finely they mount up from awareness of the darkened outer world to:

> Only from dream to dream our spirits pass;
> Well, let us rise and fly from sphere to sphere;
> Someone of all unto the light more near
> Mirrors the Dreamer in its glowing glass.

In his fourth volume, the poems written between 1903 and 1920, the elation dies down, the acceptance of the world diminishes, a question is asked:

> Who are my kinsmen in the vast?
> And shall I in this soundless calm
> Find recompense for all the past,
> Be nearer unto what I am?

In the next volume, "The Voices of the Stones," a poignant sense of loss makes itself felt—it is in that beautiful poem, "Promise," although there is still a faith that all losses will be restored. From this on the poet faces a lightless world: companions have gone, age is coming on, the old simple, innocent, useful life is broken up; a cry that questions all goes up from this prophet of immortality. But A.E. would have his last utterance one of faith. And so he ends the selection that he had made just before his death with a poem that is characteristic of his whole life:

> I look on wood and hill and sky,
> Yet without any tears;
> To the warm earth I bid goodbye
> For what unnumbered years.
>
> So many times my spirit went
> This dark transfiguring way,
> Nor ever knew what dying meant,
> Deep night or a new day.
>
> So many times it went and came,
> Deeper than thought it knows
> Unto what majesty of flame
> In what wide heaven it goes.

He believed in reincarnation and there was something about himself that made us suspend our disbelief in that strange doctrine. He must have existed in one of those ancient civilizations where the philosopher and the poet, the prophet and the priest, were one and the same person. One could see him in early India, teaching the Upanishads, chanting the Vedic hymns, or in ancient Iran, repeating the hymns of Zoroaster to a band of shepherds or warriors, or in ancient Greece chanting the hymn to Apollo or celebrating the Orphic mysteries. But perhaps the place to which he most evidently belonged was the Hellenic world in which the neo-Platonic philosophers constructed their systems: there he would have his abode in some great temple where he would have covered large spaces of the walls with pictures of the wandering of the soul through the world of sense, and would go down to address a wise audience on the descent of the Self-Existing.

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He was a man of magnitude. The tall man with the broad shoulders and the great beard would impress you by his size. And he would then impress you by geniality and kindliness: the eyes behind the glasses would look at you as if he had a conviction that there was something really likable about you. And he would have hardly looked upon you before he began to talk to you, his voice going on and on, with a North of Ireland intonation that gave it a flavor of quaintness. There are more accomplished poets and more competent philosophers left in the world. But we cannot turn to them with affection as we turned to A.E.

PADRAIC COLUM.

Professional Brass Hat

The General, by C. S. Forester. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

THIS NOVEL might be called "Why Generals Are Dumb" or "The Reason for Some of the Colossal Blunders of the World War." It is a polite and extended analysis in fiction form of the backwardness of the British military mind. Mr. Forester illuminates in sometimes pedestrian prose the high points in the military career of Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Curzon, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O. From his narration it becomes clear why so many British were killed in the World War, why so many hopeless battles were planned and fought, and why so many medals were dished out to the brass hats.

All this happened, according to Mr. Forester, because the British army had commanders like Curzon. Unimaginative and honorable, callous and generous, conservative and suspicious, conventional, gallant, courageous, a martinet—Curzon was the typical officers'-mess officer, almost a Kipling caricature. Early in his career he impressed himself upon the War Office during the Boer War, then acquired a bad case of tactical and strategical arthritis from twelve years of barracks duty. At the outbreak of the World War he was forty years old and a major. He survived the 1914 retreat through northern France and the Battle of Ypres to emerge a temporary brigadier—a rank he clinched and later raised by marrying the daughter of a Duke. When he returned to France with his new outfit he took up soldering where he left off. He permitted no excuses in his subordinates; he ordered his men never to retreat; he thought that continual driving of his men was enough to ensure success. He eschewed innovations. Mere numbers of men and guns intoxicated him. He rejected mustard gas and the tank. Bungling staff work exasperated him. His courage was only exceeded by his casualties. He helped make the military stalemate on the Western Front and the war of attrition more stupid and more bloody.

When the Germans developed attack by infiltration in March, 1918, and rolled up the British, all that Curzon could do was to leap on his horse and dash madly forward to rally his disorganized men. In short, he epitomized the old-soldier type that the World War exterminated forever. He was firm in his belief that war could only be fought by soldiers from the army regulations. He never realized the great lesson of the World War—that modern war is a matter of improvisation to be fought mainly by civilians with civilian inventiveness. Those who have been in the army should not miss this book. Civilians will learn a lot from it but probably will not appreciate its juicier passages.

ROBERT WOHLFORTH.

"Beating the Living with the Bones of the Dead"

The Living Jefferson, by James Truslow Adams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 410 pages. $3.

THE TITLE of this book is a misnomer. It should have been: "Jefferson Repainted: Pigments by du Pont, Oils by Standard Oil, Canvas by Hoosac Mills, Scenery by Schechter Brothers, Execution by James Truslow Adams." As an example of a very clever writer and historian at his worst it is excellent. As camouflage for the author's true purpose—an attack upon the New Deal—it is crystal clear. As an attempt to reconcile Jeffersonian and Rugged Individualism it is ludicrous.

The *living* Jefferson is the thinker and statesman who warned us against using the yardstick of the past alone in measuring the problems of the present. Mr. Adams treats him simply as a man who hoped for development of an agrarian rather than an industrial civilization. Whether we like it or not, an industrial civilization now dominates our lives and presents us with the problem of fitting our institutions into it.

In mind-reading on Jefferson, in telling us what he thought and what he would have done, Mr. Adams loses sight of the fact that Jefferson's mind was many faceted. It is true that he was highly individualistic, but at the moment intense individualism menaced the social good he was quick to warn that "the unwritten laws of necessity, of self-preservation, and *of the public safety* control the written laws of *meum* and *teum*." This is what Mr. Adams completely ignores. If we read the entire body of Jefferson's writings and read them not in the hope of finding substantiation for some particular point of view, we get in full perspective the mind of a man who would never have sought "to beat the living with the bones of the dead" as Mr. Adams is attempting to do.

And Mr. Adams is impartial with his mind-reading. Hence we find the Bonus Marchers getting it in the neck. George Washington, who would have "killed" the first veterans' organization had he but known, is brought in on that. There is vindication for the Supreme Court in the Schechter sick-chicken case; he says "government for Jefferson was a necessary *evil*." There is no mention of the fact that Jefferson hated the Supreme Court.

Jefferson's hatred of monopoly is portrayed, as well as his belief that property is subject to the regulation of the state, although such personal rights as freedom of speech and press must be unlimited. Mr. Adams is very careful to point out that "liberalism and liberty were not phases of his youth; they were the very fiber of his being." None of this is news.

And there is no interpretation of the *living* Jefferson at all. There is much of Jefferson's philosophy of individuality based on liberty and the use of land, but no application of it to the problems of a civilization based upon machines, industrial monopoly and central financial control. There is no analogy with the monopolies of today, no discussion of the inherent right of citizens to a means of livelihood and a participation in the means of production under the *present method*.

Mr. Adams makes much of Jefferson's dislike of paper money, of Jefferson's belief in a balanced budget, of the fact that Jefferson was neither demagogue nor a "Mobocrat." He skips over the perfectly obvious facts that Jefferson could have known nothing of modern finance

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and industry; and "balancing the budget," far from being a Jeffersonian invention, is part and parcel of any form of government. There are assertions coming like heavily laden freight cars—that he believed in a civilization based on agriculture, was opposed to primogeniture, was neither "theorist" nor "doctrinaire," had no "moon-calf vision"—which seem like efforts to apologize for Jefferson and to paint him patronizingly, at this late date, as a "liberal" (but a respectable liberal, an example of "soundness" and "practicality"), a man who was out with a glittering but very safe sword to balance the budget for the bond boys of New York.

One reads Mr. Adams' portrayal with a sense of expectancy, of waiting for the inevitable dénouement. True to his trust, Mr. Adams gathers the fluttering threads of his theme and ties them together with the essential clue in his last two chapters. Here at last his true purpose is revealed. Just another anti-New Deal propaganda book, rushed to the printer. Jefferson's party is confounded out of the mouth of Jefferson. The Roosevelt administration has forsaken the true faith; it is about the business of tearing down the Temple so laboriously erected by Jefferson. Down with Roosevelt!

Mr. Jefferson, speaking through Mr. Adams, does grudgingly and cautiously approve the vigorous action of Roosevelt in those darks days in March and April, 1933. So long as the strong arm of government is extended to aid banks and railroads all is well, but any attempt to extend this aid to the ordinary citizen, the farmer, the unemployed and the indigent aged is a frontal attack upon "Americanism."

Yes, "institutions must advance and keep pace with the times," Jefferson said. "If the man has grown too large to fit the coat he wore as a boy, whittle him down until he fits it," Mr. Adams seems to say. That is Mr. Adams' philosophy. It wasn't Jefferson's.

This book is highly recommended to the Liberty League, the Union League Club, the National Manufacturers' Association, the United States Chamber of Commerce and the better-class country clubs. MAURY MAVERICK.

Mr. Ellis' Back Files

From Rousseau to Proust, by Havelock Ellis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 411 pages. $3.50.

THIS VOLUME is not, as the publishers claim, "a unified study of modern French literature," but a number of discrete essays, dating from 1904 to the present, some written as magazine articles, some as editorial introductions, and a few reading almost painfully like contributions to the publications of the Modern Language Association. Almost one-third of the volume is devoted to six chapters about or dominated by Rousseau. There is a brief sixteen-page chapter on Hugo, and none at all on Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant, the Goncourts, Zola, Huysmans or Gide; a chapter on Verlaine, and none on Baudelaire, Rimbaud or Mallarmé; one on Gourmont, and none on Taine, Renan or Valéry. On the other hand, sixty pages are given to Alexandre de Tilly, and chapters to Besenval, Restif de la Bretonne and other names equally obscure. Such a collection is neither a balanced survey nor an exhumation of figures undeservedly obscure: the exhumations are rather from the author's files.

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darting life, that made Havelock Ellis a liberating force are seldom evident in these pages. The opening chapter, "Early Impressions of Paris," is wandering and colorless; its vignettes of literary personalities offer little that is striking. "The Love of Wild Nature" is a competently scholastic treatment of its theme, no more than mildly interesting. The Rousseau chapters are uneven in merit, the one on Madame de Warens being perhaps the best of them.

Naturally, so intelligent a writer as Havelock Ellis cannot be wholly valueless even when he is most pedestrian. His characteristic approach to any artist, which has given his criticism its greatest value elsewhere, is an effort to realize a living unity between a man and those forces of environment, ancestry or pathology that shape his work. In this volume it is most successfully applied to Bretonne and Verlaine, and perhaps to Hugo. With Rousseau and Proust, incalculably more complex personalities, it is less satisfactory—it does not greatly clarify Proust to say that he was a marked schizoid type whose sensitivity was of morbid origin. All told, it is regrettable that these essays were given the prominence of separate publication. They will add nothing to the reputation of the author of "Affirmations," "Impressions and Comments" and "The Dance of Life."

EDGAR JOHNSON.

The Higher Pitkin

Wake Up and Live! by Dorothea Brande. New York: Simon and Schuster. 198 pages. $1.75.

NO USE wasting time with a long and particular analysis of this book by way of the table of contents: it is a recipe book, all about how twenty deep bends a day will take the fat off the will-to-do, make you alert, successful, master of your fate—my friends laughed when I sat down to the solo kettle-drum, and all that. It is earnest, its advice is really sound, it is very efficient, except that Mrs. Brande, in the full sweep of her new vigor and confidence, sustains right through Wednesday's morning hour of writing what had been fairly covered in Tuesday's post-prandial: I mean she belabors undeserving points and finds many surprising ways of saying the same thing over with different verbs. The book is helpful, it is written as clearly (and with as much magic) as any set of directions-how-to-use. I do not wish to make fun of it, I could benefit by it myself, employ Mrs. Brande's candor in self-analysis in correcting the various self-pitying, defeatist, lazy qualities that tend to make sluggards of us all. True, true.

But there is something against the whole idea of such a book, and the thing is, after you have finished reading it, what then? It is a good manual, but for whom? For those who do the real thing in any art, who produce something that is true and beautiful, and we can see it and take heart from it? Don't be silly. The real thing, all that is worth encouraging, comes from those poor tormented devils who put off and put off, or throw the thing out in too much abundance, or grind it out and hate it because they love it or vice versa, or drink themselves to death, or get terribly baffled with women, the slick paper magazines, the cost of living, the damn country, New York, whatever; who blow their brains out or get comfortably married and domestic, take to flying or bomb throwing or Trappist monasteries. Poems, in short, are made by a crazily assorted bunch of blessed unpredictables, whereas any damn fool can learn to make a hatrack or a shoe tree.

OTIS FERGUSON.

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Books in Brief

Like the Phoenix, by Anthony Bertram. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

THE PATTERN of Mr. Bertram's experimental novel is created by a technique that Herbert Read once called the "systematization of confusion." Rejecting the neat travesties of slicker novelists, the author combines a discussion of the distortions experience is susceptible to in fiction, with an object lesson in the type of design that seems to him most faithful to modern life. Like Virginia Woolf he abandons beginnings and ends; like Gide and Proust he mixes the creative act with the created action; and like Romains he multiplies infinite characters who are related by the indwelling idea of an epoch. The episodic scenes are integrated by two pervasive concepts, one of which is expressed in the English title of the book ("Men Adrift") and the other in the phoenix symbol of the present title. Mr. Bertram, who has elsewhere described his work as "chiefly negative propaganda," sees the capitalist world as a rudderless ship headed for the inevitable reef. On board are pederastic bishops, hoop-la queenies, peace-weary admirals, penniless tinkers, Mosley blackshirts, Etonian communists and miscellaneous dozens of frustrated inheritors of war and depression. This is, to shift the image, the ash age of society from which man will rise, like the phoenix, to a braver world. The frequently recurring symbol of the resurrection, always carefully italicized, is the worker standing on the horizon, "his head among the stars, his steel eyes bent like a sickle on the future, his fist raised like a hammer." In its satire on decadence and its presentiment of a noble future (hope heaped on scorn), this book is the closest thing in fiction to the poetry of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis. Like the poets, Mr. Bertram has effectively fused the most advanced "bourgeois" techniques of his art with a revolutionary point of view. S. S.

The Birth of the Middle Ages: 395-814, by H. St. L. B. Moss. New York: The Oxford University Press. 309 pages. $5.

This book treats of the four centuries, from the death of Theodosius I to that of Charlemagne, during which the civilization of antiquity was rapidly declining while that of the Middle Ages was slowly emerging. It is a history of social decay and dissolution, decline in population and reversion to more primitive types of isolated economic self-sufficiency. But the imperial tradition still held possession of the minds of men, and in both East and West efforts were made to maintain or revive the empire on foundations that were no longer extant. Mr. Moss's account of the political, economic, religious, literary and artistic changes is admirable. It is clear, compact and, within its limits, thorough. Especially noteworthy are the account of the rise of Islam, which does away with several false ideas concerning this process, and that of the migrations of the Slavs, which are often ignored in books dealing with this period. H. S.

The Lost Generation, by Maxine Davis. New York: The Macmillan Company. 397 pages. $2.50.

It is almost unbelievable that Miss Davis could have traveled 10,038 miles and returned to write so listless and unconvincing a volume about young people today. There is a genuine story in this lost generation, what it is and

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what it means. Here are millions without any semblance of hope in the future. They are herded into C.C.C. camps or reduced to maddening idleness. They are barred from a satisfying social existence. They are distinct from their elders in the important sense that the shock of disinheritance is still acute and decisive. But Miss Davis does not feel this or make it felt. She heard voices and took down what they said verbatim; looking at faces, she recorded only the color of her subjects' eyes. Coming to conclusions, she could not get beyond the Liberty League Primer: "This generation is soft; it has been coddled"—relief is the job of the "local community"—"substantial, constructive citizens" of the Rotary clubs are doing more effective youth relief than anyone else, etc. Miss Davis, in short, is neither commentator nor reporter. Rather than stumble around on the surface of a question like this, she might better have stayed at home. J. W.

The Whole World and Company, by Gretchen Green. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock-The John Day Company. 313 pages. $3.

Gretchen Green travels through life with a prodigal talent for friendship and a gift for seizing every moment as it passes. This gay book of her adventures is like an April breeze, touching the oaks lightly and smiling the flowers open. Miss Green knows "everybody" and helps everybody, unobtrusively taking everything in her stride. Common sense, humor and sympathy, with sometimes a too Olympian touch of casualness and serenity. It may be Rabindranath Tagore who leans on her wisdom, or it may be a "vagrant Venus" in Idaho, where she was at one time a policewoman, or again it may be Malvina Hoffman, the sculptor, or a stray Arab on the Moroccan fringe of the picturesque. Miss Green can pour tea flavored with gentle philosophy in a Malay jungle or above a Venetian canal. All this and more is in her book, which frolics across the map and introduces one, if not to the whole world, at least to a generous cross-section of it. The "and Company" is good company. E. W. W.

Contributors

CLARENCE R. ATHEARN has been connected in a research capacity with Boston and Harvard Universities, and with the Smithsonian Institution. Until his resignation, he was research assistant for the United States Chamber of Commerce.

PADRAIC COLUM'S most recent volume is "The Legend of St. Columba." He is a member of the Irish Academy of Letters, and his collected poems have been published in this country by Macmillan.

ROBERT WOHLFORTH, a West Point graduate and author of "Tin Soldiers," was assistant chief investigator for the Senate Munitions Committee in its recent inquiry into wartime banking transactions.

MAURY MAVERICK, chunky Texas Congressman, is an able leader of the progressive forces in the House of Representatives. He is a member of the Democratic Party, a front-fighter for civil liberties and he believes the South is becoming progressive.

EDGAR JOHNSON is giving a series of lectures on satire and esthetics at the New School for Social Research. He is the author of a novel, "Unweave a Rainbow."

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Samuel Sillen, Herman Simpson, James Wechsler and Elsie Weil.

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